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THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

POLITICAL NATIVISM IN THE STATE OF MARYLAND

1830-1860

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

SISTER MARY ST. PATRICK McCONVILLE, M. A.

of

The Sisters of Saint Mary of Namur

Fort Worth, Texas

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

WASHINGTON, D. C.

1928

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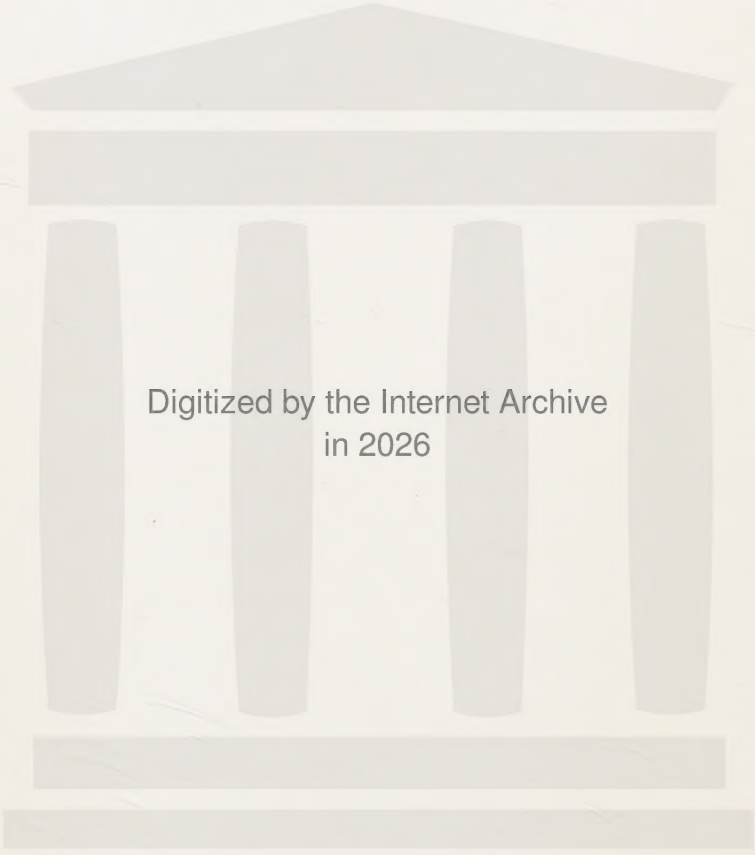
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PREFACE

Man's economic status so influences his political conceptions and activities that it may be said that political events and social changes are largely the effect of economic tendencies.

The larger divergence between the free and the slave states was reflected in Maryland in the persistent struggle between the planters of the seaboard, who controlled the wealth of the region, and the free farmers of the interior. To the gentlemen planters of the Tidewater counties, the idea of falling under the control of the back-country farmers seemed intolerable. Their protestations, manifested in the shortsighted policy of an ancient and impotent party about to vanish from the scene, took, during the three decades preceding the Civil War, the form of political nativism.

The abolition movement brought on a period of disturbed social conditions in which the atmosphere became tense with emotions. Men lost their bearings, with the result that their vague emotional attitudes, usually organized and rationalized by established ways of life, were set free, precipitated, so to speak, in the social solution. Then it was that society was guided more by feeling than by reason—hence the issues of race and religion in the politics of that period.

Nativistic movements cannot be said to originate in the spirit of American nationality, for the nationality of the Amerian character is derived from the patriotism that clings to the Constitution of the country.

The United States has always been more liberal to all its inhabitants than they have been to one another, for it is, indeed, the proud distinction of the American Constitution, that, while it ignores no interest of society as an organized order, it nurtures also a political and social individual life circumscribed by no disqualification of birth, and determined by no shade of religious opinion. In fact, the Constitution of the United States differs from all other constitutions in this very thing, that the individuality of citizens so underlies its entire foundation that injuriously to touch it weakens every part of the social and political structure reared upon it.

Political nativism in Maryland, during the period embraced in

this paper, struck directly at the heart of this individual life, more especially the movement in the fifties, whose leaders, in order to make their cause appear a purely political measure, pretended to attack Catholics only in their relation to the State, and for this purpose endeavored to cast suspicion upon their loyalty to the Constitution.

In the preparation of this paper, the writer has based her conclusions upon independent study of documentary sources and other contemporary material. In special fields, she has made use of the findings of other investigators, and throughout she has consulted the larger historical works which cover the period.

To the librarians of the Catholic University of America, of Georgetown University, and of the Library of Congress, the author wishes to express her sincere thanks for the invaluable assistance rendered her in her research. To Dr. Richard J. Purcell, Associate Professor of History, Catholic University of America, at whose suggestion this study was undertaken, and to Dr. Charles H. McCarthy, Head of the Department of History of the Catholic University of America, to whose scholarly direction its successful completion is due, the author is deeply grateful.

POLITICAL NATIVISM IN THE STATE OF MARYLAND, 1830-1860

CHAPTER I

Organized Political Nativism in Maryland

On November 5, 1844, the very day after Henry Clay had been defeated for the presidency, the *Baltimore Clipper* fearlessly proclaimed its attachment and adherence "to the American Republican Party."[1] *The North American* noted this as the first sign between Philadelphia and New Orleans of the formation of a party to oppose foreign influence and to secure to Americans that control in the government of their own country, which right and expediency demanded.[2]

At the earnest solicitation of a large number of subscribers, the editors of the *Clipper,* to make the title of their paper conform to the principles which it advocated, changed its name to the *American Republican,* and substituted for the Maryland coat-of-arms the spread eagle with the national motto. It was on November 11, 1844, that this newspaper thus formally proclaimed itself the official organ of the American Republicans of Baltimore.

Agitation for the organization of this party in Baltimore had begun in the spring of 1844, when the New York elections had terminated in a complete revolution in favor of the American Republicans. At that time, through its columns, the *Clipper* gave its readers the following information regarding this new party. The American Republican party had originated some time before in New Orleans and had for its chief object the extension of the period of residence preceding naturalization. Detroit followed New

[1] *Clipper,* November 5, 1844.

[2] *The North American,* Philadelphia, November 6, 1844.

Note—Unless otherwise stated, the references are to Baltimore newspapers.

Orleans in organizing a society for the same purpose, but the most formidable association was that which had been formed in the city of New York in 1843, and which had been so successful in the late city elections. This new organization was composed of seceders from both the Whig and Democratic parties, and conspicuous members of both the old parties had become leaders in the new association. The alleged motive for forming the American Republican party was to correct abuses which had been practiced by both Whigs and Democrats in the city administration, particularly in the preference said to have been given to naturalized citizens over native citizens in making appointments. Philadelphia soon followed New York in forming Native American associations, whose members equalled in number those of New York, and the probability was that Native American tickets, state and city, would be formed. In Philadelphia, as in New York, Whigs and Democrats united themselves to the new party. In New Jersey similar associations were being formed, and it was thought that by the end of the following year the movement would have spread throughout the land. Already memorials had been sent to Congress on the subject of the naturalization laws, and there could be no doubt that an effort would be made to extend the period of probation much beyond the existing limit.[3]

In June, 1844, the Catholics of Philadelphia were much offended by the presentment of the grand jury, in the case of the May riots in that city. This jury had attributed the origin of the Native American Associations,[4] and by inference the riots, to an alleged attempt on the part of the Catholics to exclude the Bible from the public schools.[5] The Catholics had just held a meeting and published an address [6] in which they clearly proved that no such attempt had been made, but that, on the contrary, the Catholic citizens and clergy were satisfied that the Bible should be used, only asking as a matter of justice, that the Catholic children should be permitted

[3] *Clipper*, June 17, 1844.

[4] The Native Americans had been organized before this time. *See* Shea, *A History of the Catholic Church in the United States*, 1844-1866, p. 47.

[5] Lee, *The Origin and Progress of the American Party in Politics*, p. 29.

[6] Shea, *History of the Catholic Church*, 1844-1866, p. 54.

to use the edition of the Bible sanctioned by their Church,[7] as was the case in Baltimore. The *Clipper* saw nothing unjust or offensive in the request of the Catholics, nor anything which should not be granted without hesitation, in fact the editors thought that its denial would be considered illiberal and unjust, and entirely inconsistent with the principles of the free institutions of the United States which recognize perfect freedom of religious opinion.[8]

In appealing for an organization of the American Republican party in Baltimore, its organ declared that the party had been forced into existence by the indiscretion of foreigners.[9] It further maintained that it was the first time since the adoption of the Constitution that an attempt had been openly made to create a foreign party in the nation—a party separate in purpose and interest from the American people, and it asserted that if the present parties continued their organization, it would be in the power of the new foreign party to control the destinies of the nation, by throwing its strength into either scale, as interest might dictate.

To recruit members for the new party, an invitation was extended to Baltimore citizens, wherever born, to whatsoever party they might have been heretofore attached, or whatever might be their religious belief, cordially to unite to purge the country of an evil, which if not timely checked, might be productive of most disastrous consequences. It was thought by some that the powers of Europe, unable to destroy the free government of the United States by open means, were laboring to effect it more secretly and securely through the agency of organized bodies of their subjects in the land.[10]

In Baltimore a Manifesto of the American Republican principles was published, repeated calls were made to organize, and a hope was expressed that the city would send delegates to the national convention of American Republicans which was to be held in New York, and whose object was to organize a National American party. However, it was not until February 26, 1845, that a town-meeting was held to organize the party in Baltimore. The

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48. Kirlin, *Catholicity in Philadelphia*, pp. 326-329.
[8] *Clipper*, June 24, 1844.
[9] *Ibid.*, November 7, 1844.
[10] *Clipper*, November 5, 1844.

Manifesto was presented for consideration and in a few days ward meetings were called for the purpose of perfecting the organization. Representatives from the several wards met on March 5, to appoint delegates to the national convention, and a committee was selected to draft an address to the citizens of Baltimore.

Accordingly, at a meeting of the American Republican convention, held in Baltimore, March 12, 1845, there was adopted the following address, which embraced a brief statement of the grievances of which they complained, and the principles by which they intended to be governed:

Address of the American Republican Convention of Baltimore to the Public.

In coming before their fellow-citizens with a brief exposition of the causes which have impelled them to associate as American Republicans, and a declaration of principles by which they intend to be governed, the members of the American Republican Convention of the City of Baltimore are fully aware of the responsibilities they assume, and the importance of the position they occupy.—Yet, as American citizens, deeply sensible of their obligation to maintain the free institutions which are their boast and glory, they willingly encounter the labors which will necessarily attend the effort to introduce into the administration of government, general, state and municipal, those reforms which are required to restore purity, economy and safety.

In the progress of partizan conflicts, the honor, the interests, and the welfare of the nation have been sacrificed. In the struggle, for victory, abuses have been introduced and tolerated by both of the great political parties, which strike at the foundation of American liberty. Foreign influence has been courted, and adopted citizens encouraged to band together as distinct orders of society, and having interests separate from the mass of their fellow-citizens, and endowed with the privilege of aiding in the selection of our rulers of every grade. The elective franchise has become degraded and contemptible, and our elections no longer express the sentiments of the freemen of this country. The ballot-box is corrupted by illegal votes; and, in short, every engine of fraud and corruption has been set in motion, to disgrace the American character, and to pave the way for the overthrow of our liberties.

Under these circumstances, and impressed with the indispensable necessity of checking the downward course of the country, and of reanimating the people with the principles which characterized our re-

volutionary sires, the American Republican party has been brought into existence. They come before their fellow-citizens as a body of Americans, having no selfish or interested motives, but with stern resolve to correct abuses; retrench expenses; and purge the nation of those influences which are destroying the public happiness and impairing confidence in the efficiency of our republican institutions.

They entertain no hostility to foreigners, nor have they any disposition whatever to proscribe them from the full and free exercise of all the privileges and advantages of our common country; but they do contend that the peculiar form and nature of our government require, that the right of suffrage should not be extended to the foreigner until he has resided among us, not only long enough to learn the letter of our constitution and spirit of our laws, but until he shall have had sufficient time *completely* and *entirely* to divest himself of all prejudice for the government and country of his birth and education, and to have become so incorporated with the genius of our institutions; so imbued with the genius of our institutions; so imbued with a love of our country, and so identified with the welfare and perpetuity of our government, as to be in *spirit* and in fact, as truly American as though to the "manor born." *Then,* and *not till then,* should the foreigner be privileged to take part in making our laws, maintaining our government, and conducting the great interests of our nation. Entertaining these sentiments, the Convention believe that a change in the naturalization laws is imperiously required, and will use their best endeavors to procure it.

They most distinctly and unequivocally disavow any intention to interfere with the religious opinions of individuals. They hold religion to be a matter exclusively between man and his Creator, and for which he is not responsible to any human tribunal, so long as he does not disturb the order of society or violate any law. They are hostile to any combination between Church and State—politics and religion—as destructive of human rights, and dangerous to civil liberty. The experience of mankind has shewn, that power cannot be safely entrusted to any sect; and happily for the people of the United States, the constitution has wisely guaranteed a perfect toleration of religious opinion.

The members of the Convention are aware, that distinctions have always existed and must continue to exist in society; but it may not be unworthy of consideration whether the mass of the people have enjoyed all the rights and privileges to which they are entitled. They are impressed with the conviction that it would be advantageous to the

public interests, if modest and retiring citizens were more frequently required to serve in public stations, to the exclusion of the forward and ambitious aspirants for office, who too often look to a distribution of "the spoils of victory" for compensation for their labors, rather than to an approving conscience, or the respect of their fellow-citizens.

It is apparent that the violent and vindictive political conflicts in which the people of the United States have been engaged for about twenty years past, have been most injurious in their effects, by weakening confidence in our institutions; deteriorating morals; and introducing corruption of the most flagrant character. It is time that power should be exercised for the common benefit of our country, and not for the reward of partizan services; and that the patriotic and virtuous of all parties should unite to extinguish selfish partizan warfare, and to raise the nation from her degradation. On the subject of party spirit the American Republican Convention of Baltimore adopt the language of the father of his country, George Washington; confident that they cannot resort to a purer source for opinions on matters which affect the interests of the American people. Hear what he says—"It serves always to distract the public councils, and enfeebles the public administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one party against another; and foment occasional riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the government itself through the channels of party passion.—Thus the policy and will of one country, are subjected to the policy and will of another."—Had General Washington been spared to the present day, he could not have more faithfully portrayed the influence and effects of party spirit upon the great affairs of the nation. He emphatically warned us against every error into which we have fallen, and we are now laboring under all the disadvantages attendant upon the neglect of his advice. It is not, however, too late to retrace our steps and resume the path from which we have deviated; and to do this is the intent and purpose of the American Republicans of the country. Whether or not they can succeed in inducing their countrymen to "turn from the error of their way," remains for time to develop. So far success has crowned their efforts, and they have no cause of despondency for the future. To this great work of political regeneration the American Republicans of Baltimore have placed their hands, nor will they intermit their exertions whilst a hope remains of triumph.

In conclusion then, they invite their fellow-citizens of all parties, native and adopted, to unite with them in attaining the great objects

which they have in view; on the realization of which they firmly believe, depends the future welfare, if not the existence, of their beloved country and its free institutions.[11]

Samuel Child, President
And W. J. Bandel, 1st. V. Pres't.
Nicholas Brewer, 2nd V. Pres't.

John C. Holland,
William Hanna, } Secretaries.

By March 18, 1845, the American Republicans in some of the wards of the city had organized for business, but permanent ward associations were not formed until April because of the delay occasioned by the division of the fourteen city wards into twenty. The convention, early in its proceedings, had adopted a resolution to dissolve as soon as the division of wards had taken place.[12]

During this time of organization, appeals were made to mechanics and workingmen as a class of citizens more deeply affected by the speedy and indiscriminate admission of foreigners to the rights of citizenship. It was intimated to them that as they were the "bone and sinew" of the city, they deserved to have greater influence in the management of public affairs than they were at that time enjoying. Retrenchment and reform were being agitated in the city and in some of the counties, and it was the belief of the American Republicans that the people of the state desired to have such reforms made in the constitution as would diminish the public expense, but they doubted whether that could be attained if the approaching elections were to be contested on old party grounds. They believed that party spirit should yield to the more important object of amalgamating public sentiment and uniting public energy in favor of reform.

The work of the American Republicans did not pass unnoticed by the political parties of Baltimore. The action of the Whig legislature providing for the reörganization of the wards of the city under the superintendence of commissioners appointed by the Whig executive was said to be a gerrymander for party purposes and an unwarrantable interference in municipal affairs which was as

[11] *Clipper*, March 13, 1845.
[12] *Clipper*, July 7, 1845.

uncalled for as it was subversive of chartered rights.[13] It was said to be a trick to throw the Ninth Ward into the Third Congressional District and thereby to secure the reëlection of the Hon. John P. Kennedy to Congress from the Second District, and to have a majority of the wards elect Whig councilmen, even should the aggregate vote be against them.[14]

On July 4, 1845, the national convention held in Philadelphia adopted the title "Native American Party." The members of the Baltimore organization did not approve of this change, as they considered it indicative of a contracted policy which it was easy to foresee must prove injurious to the party. They declared that while they went heart and hand with those who were opposed to all foreign combinations amongst them, to all subdivisions of parties into classes, to all illegal voting or other corrupt practices at elections, and were favorable to such change in the naturalization laws as should prevent the infamous system of manufacturing votes for the occasion, they could not and would not consent to any measure which should exclude naturalized citizens from the rights and privileges which they were then enjoying. They made it very emphatic that those were the conditions on which they had adopted the American Republican cause—to which they had added one other—that under no consideration would they connect religion with politics, or attack or interfere with the religious opinion of anyone.[15]

Before August 20, the delegates from the several wards had met to form a city convention which adopted the title Native American with a view of harmonizing with the party throughout the Union, and only with the understanding that there "would be no change in principles."[16] On August 20, they held a meeting at which were read the preamble and resolutions passed by the National American convention in Philadelphia, July 5-7, 1845. These were adopted with one or two exceptions. The resolutions of the Native American convention of Baltimore were published in the *Clipper* on September 3, 1845. It must be noted that the follow-

[13] *Republican and Argus*, March 15, 1845.

[14] *N. Y. Herald* (Baltimore correspondent. Quoted in *Clipper*, June 18, 1845).

[15] *Clipper*, July 9, 1845.

[16] *Clipper*, August 20, 1845.

ing resolution, which was among those adopted by the National American convention of Philadelphia,[17] was omitted from the Baltimore resolutions:

> *Resolved,* That the Bible, as the only basis of Christianity, lies at the bottom of all true liberty and equality, and thus as the corner-stone of our free institutions should be freely read by all men.

The Native American convention was quite frank in stating its view on the subject of retrenchment and reform. It was thought that the coming election for members of the House of Delegates should be conducted with an eye single to the subject of reform, but the idea of making reform a party question was distinctly disavowed, for it was considered indispensable to the success of any legislative ticket that it should be favorable to the cause of retrenchment and reform and to the holding of a state convention to revise the constitution.

On August 26, 1845, the Native American convention nominated candidates for Congress and for the legislature. As most of the nominees were mechanics, the Native Americans expected their ticket to be particularly acceptable to the laboring element among the citizens. They appealed to the workingmen to rally manfully in support of it as an opportune time to strike for their rights.

Although a committee was appointed to draft a constitution for the Natives, none was ever published in the newspapers. After September 12, 1845, mass-meetings were substituted for the ward meetings. The *New York Herald* noted this with the following comment: "The Natives have had several mass-meetings of late, and have succeeded in humbugging some two or three hundred mechanics, principally Democrats, into an adherence to their fanatical and corrupt schemes." The bait being held out was the competition of foreign-born mechanics with those of native birth, which Americans contended was breaking down prices and ruining their business. It was true that German mechanics were overrunning several of the trades, but nativism could not remedy this evil. However, it was feared that there would be a heavy Native American vote because of the competition. At a meeting held in Monument

[17] Lee, *The Origin and Progress of the American Party in Politics,* p. 250.

Square, September 26, Mr. Duncan, the Native American candidate for Congress, said that he had been a Democrat, and he indignantly repelled the charge that Native Americans intended to proscribe any religious sect.[18]

The Native American party on the eve of the election declared itself distinct from both the old parties and asserted that it assumed ground which neither of them had the independence to occupy. It considered itself an association of honest men for the preservation of the Union, who were resolved to put down foreign influence, to protect American mechanics and workingmen, to arrest the practice of transporting foreign criminals and paupers to this country, to purge the ballot-box of illegal votes, to alter the naturalization laws and require that immigrants should bring consular certificates of good character or not be permitted to land. In short, the Native Americans declared that they were for adopting the American policy to have Americans rule, and that they were looking forward to the time when they should be able to aid in placing Americans in the various departments of the government, national, state and municipal.[19]

In the elections, the Native Americans were completely defeated by the Democrats, who elected Congressmen, Sheriff, and Delegate tickets. The Maryland election returns showed that there were only Whig and Democratic tickets in the counties.[20]

The election in Maryland was taken as one of the most significant signs of the times, indicating the confusion that was about to take place in the political parties throughout the country and which had been anticipated for some time. In the city of Baltimore, by throwing in the element of nativism as a third party, the Whigs had been entirely defeated. This same state of confusion existed in several other districts of Maryland, in fact the election had been disastrous to the Whigs throughout the state. It seems that the Whigs of Baltimore had not given to nativism the same support that it had received from that party in other cities, in fact it has been said that the Whigs of Baltimore denounced nativism from its very beginning.[21]

[18] *Clipper*, September 27, 1845.
[19] *Clipper*, October 1, 1845.
[20] *Clipper*, October 3, 1845.
[21] *New York Herald*, October 7, 1845.

The singularly mingled character of the results created a great deal of remark and observation by the journals of the various parties throughout the country. The greatest sensation, however, was produced in the columns of the leading organs of the two parties in Washington,—the administration organ, the *Union,* on the one side, and the organ of the opposition, the *Intelligencer,* on the other. Singularly both these organs claimed a great triumph. The *Union,* representing the views of Mr. Polk and his cabinet, thought that the election was conclusively in favor of a reduction and modification of the tariff, whilst the *Intelligencer* believed it to be a moral triumph against everything like state repudiation.

In Baltimore the actual decrease in the number of votes in 1845 compared with the number cast in 1844 was 9470. In this decrease the largest proportion consisted of Whig votes; the decrease in the vote of that party was 7353 in one year, while the decrease was only 2117 in the Democratic ranks. This, of course, related to the popular vote. As to the particular results in regard to the state legislature and Congress, the facts varied in a remarkable degree. In reference to Congress, the Whigs elected two, and the Democrats four members, giving them a majority of 2 to 1 in the Congressional delegation, while in the state legislature the Whigs still had an aggregate majority of the two houses, equal to twenty over the Democrats. Thus the attempt to organize a "native" party in the city of Baltimore produced no other effect in that city than the defeat of a Whig candidate for Congress.[22]

In the election for members of the city council of Baltimore, October 7, 1845, the Whigs and Natives declared war on each other. The Democrats quietly looked on, knowing that the disaffection of Natives and Whigs would insure their winning a majority of the wards, which otherwise the Whigs could easily carry. The Whigs, in an endeavor to outnumber both Natives and Democrats in the Whig wards, rallied their forces to draw back to the field as many of their recreant friends as possible. However, the Natives so divided the Whig vote that the Whigs did not think it worth while to nominate candidates but in eight of twenty wards. In those wards with only Democratic and Native tickets, many leading Whigs voted the former as a sure means of defeating the latter.

[22] *New York Herald,* October 9, 1845.

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The results of the election showed that out of thirty members of the city council twenty-six were Democrats and four were Whigs. There was not one Native candidate elected, although the Natives had nominations in every ward.

The Whigs of Baltimore—real staunch Clay Whigs—were depressed and broken down. A few traitors in their own ranks had overturned the solid fabric which had so long withstood the assaults of Democracy.[23]

The Natives made desperate efforts to sustain their organization after this signal defeat in the elections and urged their members to keep an independent position and to have no entangling alliances with either of the old parties. At a meeting of the Native American convention of the city of Baltimore, held October 22, 1845, the following resolutions were offered and unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That the members of this convention do solemnly pledge themselves, each to the other, that they will never relax in honorable efforts to promote the patriotic principles of the Native American party.

Resolved, That the result of the recent two elections in the city of Baltimore, was more favorable to our cause, in view of the partizan organizations existing amongst us, than our most favorable hopes had led us to expect, and afforded confirmation strong as proof need be, that the day is not far distant, if our principles are properly promulgated, when "OLD MARYLAND" will hail with shouts of gladness the triumph of the Native American party from her sea-shore to her mountain top.

Resolved, That it is gratifying to us to know that public opinion in this community is daily conceding the purity of our motives, and applauding the firmness of our purpose in our endeavors to perpetuate the doctrines of WASHINGTON, and of the other SAGES and HEROES of '76.

Resolved, That no adversity or defeat can obliterate or obscure the NATIVE AMERICAN principles, for they are founded on the eternal basis of TRUTH and FREEDOM, nor can any abuse or misrepresentation, intimidate or silence their advocates whose only crime is an ardent love of their NATIVE LAND.

Resolved, That we recommend to our friends throughout the State

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[23] *New York Herald,* October 12, 1845. (The Baltimore correspondent).

and Nation, to form Associations for the extension of a knowledge of our principles, until "NATIONAL VICTORY SHALL PERCH UPON THE BANNER OF THE FREE."

Resolved, That the foregoing resolutions be signed by the officers of this Convention, and published in the American Republican.

ISAIAH BALDERSTON, Pres't.,
ELI BENNETT,
DAVID PARR, Vice Pres'ts.

James S. Piper,
Henry F. Reigart, } Secretaries.[24]

The autumn of 1845 found Nativism in Philadelphia in the last stage of decay. It had followed the example and shared the fate of the same movement in New York, where, under a fair and legitimate name, it had first come into existence. As the common sense of New York would not tolerate a party that was worse in its morals and in its public faith than either of the two old parties, which had preceded it in the government of the city, nativism had been completely overthrown in the preceding New York election. In Philadelphia, where nativism, or rather ultra-Presbyterian fanaticism, became rampant for a few months, the appropriate fruits were seen in the creation of riots, the conflagration of churches, and incipient civil war.[25] Nativism there, had, however, according to the *New York Herald,* been laid completely in the dust.[26]

The wisdom of the American people, even in the midst of confusion, difficulty, and disunion, had been evidenced in the defeat of an attempt to create a Native American party in Baltimore. Indeed, such a party had no place in a field where both Whigs and Democrats were still strong and active, besides, it lacked the avowed anti-Popery elements which characterized later nativistic movements.

The program of the American Republicans was confined mainly to two points: public offices should be filled by native Americans only, and naturalization should be allowed only after a sojourn of twenty-one years in the country. The Native American party of 1845 in Maryland, being purely political, failed.

[24] *Clipper,* October 24, 1845.
[25] Kirlin, *Catholicity in Philadelphia,* pp. 304 ff.
[26] *New York Herald,* October 17, 1845.

CHAPTER II

Nativism in the Maryland Constitutional Convention, 1850-1851

Agitation for constitutional reform in Maryland, extending over a period of twenty-five years, was nothing more than the old struggle between conservatism and progress, with its attendant nativism. In the constitutional convention itself, which was finally called in 1850, considerable jealousy of foreigners was shown, and the beginnings of Know-Nothingism were clearly seen.

After the War of 1812, with evident relief America turned away from Europe, and sought the West, the region of opportunity. The new spirit of democracy, which began to diffuse itself throughout the United States, was manifested in the adoption by many states of new constitutions, nearly all of which dropped the property qualifications for voting, and turned over to the voters the responsibility of choosing the presidential electors. These vital changes corresponded to the great and important changes in the political, social, and economic life of the people.

To keep pace with the neighboring states,[1] a large portion of the people of Maryland demanded of the legislature the right of meeting in a convention, elected by the people, for the purpose of amending the state constitution. The legislature, defending itself behind the phraseology of the fifty-ninth article of the constitution,[2] resisted for over twenty years every attempt of the friends of constitutional reform to secure the calling of a convention. To this difficulty was added the fear of agitating the slavery question in the state.

The original constitution of Maryland was framed in 1776 and remained the fundamental law of the state until 1851. To conform to social and economic progress, the General Assembly had amended or abolished its more objectionable features, but these alterations were far from producing the desired results.

Representing the agricultural and conservative element of the people, the Whigs, as a political party, were opposed to a constitu-

[1] Jameson, *The Constitutional Convention*, pp. 209; 533 ff.

[2] *Constitution of 1776*, Art. 59.

tional convention. A system of representation, recognized by the constitution of the state, enabled them to have a majority in the General Assembly, although in respect to popular numbers they were in a minority. This influence they were reluctant to surrender to the growing population of the northern and western sections of the state, especially to the city of Baltimore with its rapidly increasing alien population.[3] Self-protection, they considered, demanded the retention of the state government in their own hands, and it was not until revolution threatened the state that the counties of southern Maryland and of the Eastern Shore consented to submit to the calling of a constitutional convention.[4]

In the convention, which was finally called in 1850, the first subject to be considered was that of apportioning representation in the General Assembly among the several counties and Baltimore City. This was the most difficult question upon which the convention was called to act, and it was one of the last to be disposed of. To many, this issue took precedence over all others before the convention. However, the nativist organ in Baltimore did not consider the subject of representation as overshadowing all other matters of reform, and announced that it would be satisfied "with less than justice on this point" if more important reforms were perfected.[5] In fact, the editors of the *Clipper* did not consider representation as one of the reforms required by the people in demanding the calling of a convention, and they were of the opinion that it would not be to the interest of Baltimore to have a "useless number of delegates," as it might have the effect of combining the counties against her. If this combination could not be effected in the House of Delegates, it could be done in the Senate.[6] In Maryland, this was the old cry of county rights, a cry that has played a most important part in the history of that state.[7]

The reäpportioning of representation in the General Assembly was rendered necessary because of rapid growth of population in the northern and western sections of the state, especially in Balti-

[3] *Gazetteer of the State of Maryland*, 1852, p. 29.
[4] Harry, *The Maryland Constitution of 1851*, p. 33.
[5] *Clipper*, February 4, 1851.
[6] *Clipper*, March 8, 1851.
[7] Steiner, *Citizenship and Suffrage in Maryland*, p. 38.

more City. As a result, the principal issue before the convention was between the growing sections of the state on the one hand, and the southern counties of the Eastern and Western Shores on the other. The latter, fearing the preponderance of Baltimore's influence in the legislature, had fixed an unjust limitation on her representation.[8]

In 1850, Baltimore City included over one-fourth of the entire population of the state, but her representation embraced only about one-sixteenth of the total representation in the House of Delegates.[9] The smaller counties were generally willing to give representation according to population to the counties, but desired to restrict the representation of Baltimore City to equal representation with that of the largest county or to give it the same representation as was agreed to in 1836.[10] There were peculiarities connected with this question, because in the apportionment of representatives would come the struggle for the distribution of political power.[11] The city of Baltimore and the counties which were wealthy and populous protested against the injustice of the smaller counties' controlling the state legislature.[12] The smaller counties having a majority in the legislature under the old constitution declared that they would never surrender the rights and privileges which that constitution had conferred upon them;[13] moreover, they argued that they could not give to Baltimore the representation to which she was entitled on the basis of population, because to do so would confer upon her the means of absorbing all the political influence of the state. Still some were willing to yield an equivalent which would make the city stronger than it then was and which would as far as possible balance the power in the state without detriment to any section.[14] This determination was controlled by their interest in the institution of slavery.

In the smaller counties of both Shores, agriculture was extensively carried on, and slave labor was productive. The southern

[8] *Act 1824*, ch. 115; *Act 1835*, ch. 98; *Act 1836*, ch. 197, sec. 9.

[9] *United States Census*, 1850; *Debates, Maryland Constitutional Convention*, 1850-1851, I, p. 287.

[10] Harry, *The Maryland Constitution of 1851*, p. 18; *Debates*, I, p. 286.

[11] *Debates*, I, p. 133.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[13] *Constitution of 1776*, art. 59.

[14] *Debates*, I, p. 135.

planters had much of their capital invested in that kind of property, and, therefore, they jealously guarded the institution of slavery from both internal and external interference. They considered that security could be best assured when they had a controlling voice in the government of the state. This predominant influence in the General Assembly they could no longer hope to retain if representation should be based on popular numbers as was urged by Baltimore City and the larger counties. Furthermore, the southern counties feared that the convention might change the relation between master and slave as it then existed in the state.[15]

Early in the proceedings of the convention on the subject of representation, Mr. Presstman, of Baltimore, anticipating the representatives of the counties interested in slavery, submitted a proposition providing that the legislature should have no power to abolish the relation between master and slave as it then existed in the state and that the committee on the legislative department be instructed to report an act to carry out this provision.[16] This was looked upon as a decided advance in the way of conciliation on the subject of representation, since it came from that part of the state not particularly interested in slavery; a reciprocal concession was expected in return from the southern counties in regard to representation. However, that part of Maryland was considering not only the immediate protection of slavery within the state but its future safety, when it would be practically confined to southern Maryland. At the rate of decrease at that time, they considered that it would be only a few years until slavery would have entirely disappeared from the northern and western counties. Consequently, they refused to compromise in any manner that would lessen their influence in the General Assembly.[17]

Thus against the recognition of population as the basis of representation, there was both a sectional and a political interest; sectional, because it would have thrown the smaller counties in the minority in future legislatures, and political, because it would have given the state to the Democrats, a thing which the Whigs, who were in the majority, were determined to prevent. Under such

[15] *Act 1836*, ch. 197, sec. 26.

[16] *Debates*, I, p. 113.

[17] Harry, *The Maryland Constitution of 1851*, pp. 40-41.

circumstances it was quite evident that the contention could be settled only by a compromise, which was finally effected after long deliberation.

On April 1, the question of apportioning representation was disposed of as follows: representation in the House of Delegates was apportioned among the counties on a population basis for the first time in the history of the state; Baltimore City was limited in the House to four more delegates than the most populous county.[18] No county was to have fewer than two members, and the whole number of delegates was never to exceed eighty.[19] The Senate consisted of one senator from each county and from the city of Baltimore, elected by the people.[20] By this method the representation of Baltimore City in the General Assembly was increased from one-sixteenth to one-eighth of the total representation of the state.[21]

Although nativism was in evidence in the debates on representation, it was not so openly manifested there as in the proceedings relative to the question of the franchise.

In the proceedings, as early as November 29, 1850, Mr. Dent, of St. Mary's County, submitted the following resolution:

Resolved, That the committee to consider and report respecting the elective franchise, inquire into the propriety of engrafting into the Constitution of Maryland, some provision restricting from future foreign immigrants to the State of Maryland, the right of suffrage, until they shall have been residents of said State for at least ten years after they shall have given notice to the proper authorities, of their intention to become citizens of the United States, and have been fully naturalized according to the laws of the United States.[22]

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[18] Baltimore county was the most populous county. According to the Census of 1850, it had a total population of 41,589; of this number, 37,822 were free. Baltimore City had a total population of 169,012; of this number, 166,066 were free.

(It must be remembered that from about 1840, Baltimore city had been separated from Baltimore county. It has been the only incorporated municipality in the country without county government, and answers in many respect to the English "county-boroughs".) Steiner, *Citizenship and Suffrage in Maryland,* p. 33.

[19] *Debates,* II, p. 197.

[20] *Debates,* I, p. 287.

[21] Harry, *The Maryland Constitution of 1851,* p. 47.

[22] *Proceedings of the Maryland Constitutional Convention,* 1851, p. 94.

Even more discriminating was the contention that the convention had the right to preclude naturalized citizens from the exercise of the elective franchise within the state, because by the act of naturalization, not political, but civil rights only were given.[23] It was even attempted to have a definition of who are citizens of Maryland inserted in the constitution.[24] On the question as to the residence of voters there was much diversity of opinion. It was urged on the one hand, that the voter should show not only a residence of one year in the state and six months in the county, but that Baltimore's wards should rank, for this purpose, as counties and that the voter should live sixty, thirty, or even ten or fifteen days previous to election in the precinct in which he desired to vote. However, these latter requirements were not acceptable to the majority of the convention.[25]

In these measures discriminating against a portion [26] of the population of Baltimore party lines were not strictly drawn, though most of the proposed restrictions seem to have been favored by the Whigs and opposed by the Democrats.[27]

Another matter that received the earnest consideration of the convention was that of public education. Maryland, at that time, had no general system of public schools, and all efforts to remedy this evil were successfully opposed by Baltimore and the larger counties. As the failure to provide for a uniform system of public schools caused a general feeling of disappointment in the convention, it was to be expected that soon after its adjournment efforts would be made to obtain legislation on the important subject of education. Besides, it is noteworthy that a reform in a system of representation is generally followed by some serious action in regard to education. This is to be expected. Two causes, as a rule, bring about such action, namely, the increased power of the democracy with the determination to use that power for its own advantage, and

[23] *Debates*, I, p. 73.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 29, 30, 41, 54, 63, 70, 80.

[26] Out of Maryland's free population of 166,066 persons, 35,617 were foreigners. *Gazetteer of the State of Maryland, Compiled from the Returns of the Seventh Census of the United States*, 1852.

[27] Steiner, *Citizenship and Suffrage in Maryland*, p. 36.

the alarm of the upper classes at being in the hands of an uneducated electorate with the recognition of the necessity of educating their masters.[28]

The Reform Constitutional Convention adjourned the 13th of May, 1851, and in about a year an education bill was brought before the Maryland legislature. The agitation which followed was an indication of the latent animosities of the so-called Natives against foreigners, naturalized citizens, and Catholics—animosities that a few years later burst forth in all their fury and caused so much injury to the state.

[28] Mr. Francis Adams in his history of the elementary school contest in England as quoted by Steiner, *Hist. of Education in Maryland*, p. 51.

CHAPTER III

The Kerney School Bill, 1852-1853

In 1852, during the spring session of the Maryland legislature, Mr. Kerney, Chairman of the Committee on Education, reported a bill entitled, an act to reduce to a uniform system the several laws for the instruction of youth in the public schools of the state, which was read for the first time and ordered to be printed.[1]

On April 23, 1852, the *Sun* published the preamble and resolutions adopted by the Board of Public School Commissioners at a special meeting held on April 22. In these, Mr. Kerney was personally assailed and his actions misrepresented. However, he met the charge and repelled the attack.[2] This inaugurated a series of discussions in the newspapers. The enemies of the bill at first confined themselves to complaining of it as an attempt to overthrow the system of public instruction in Baltimore City, and warned the legislature to pause before passing a measure which might destroy the school system of the state built up by perseverance, by care, and at a heavy cost.[3] Then they were fearful that the people of Baltimore would be stripped of the power to regulate the local system of education, as the bill proposed that the School Commissioners be elected every two years by the people, which, they said, would constantly hold in subjection to the "will of the popular majority" the system with all its associations, its means and appliances.[4] But the statement that wounded the pride of the School Commissioners more than any other was that made by Mr. Kerney in reference to the maladministration of the school funds.[5]

The complaints, however, soon took a new turn which clearly showed that the cause of dissatisfaction lay in the 26th section of the bill.

Sec. 26th, And be it enacted, That from and after the passage of this act, it shall and may be lawful for the School Commissioners of

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[1] *Journal of the House of Delegates*, 1852, p. 606.
[2] *Sun*, April 26, 1852.
[3] *Clipper*, April 26, 1852.
[4] *Sun*, May 4, 1852.
[5] *Ibid.*

the several counties and of the city of Baltimore respectively, to appropriate annually, in quarterly payments, for the support of Orphan Asylum Schools, and for the education of children taught gratuitously in any School within their jurisdiction respectively so much of the common School Fund as in their judgment, may be just and reasonable; provided that the amount so appropriated shall not exceed, for each orphan or child taught gratuitously as aforesaid, the amount annually expended for the education of each pupil in any of the Public Schools of the same order or grade; and provided, also, that the Trustees or Directors shall quarterly report to the Board of Commissioners the number of orphans taught in said Asylum, and the number of children taught gratuitously as aforesaid; and provided, moreover, that every such Orphan Asylum and School as aforesaid, shall be open to the visits of the Board of Commissioners in order that they may satisfy themselves of the correctness of the report.[6]

Hitherto, no occasion had offered itself for the expression of the views of persons of all religions or of no religion in favor of such reform as the proposed measure provided. Because none had occurred, an attempt was made to create the impression that the existing condition of the school system was universally satisfactory. Many unthinking and uninformed persons were thus led into opposition to the new bill. However, there were many others who hoped that an opportunity would be afforded for the elucidation of a bill so liberal, so humane, and so democratic. But from the first appearance of the bill, those advocating its passage were condemned unheard, although they were seeking a just, salutary, and legal administration of the public school law.[7]

On May 4, 1852, a bill entitled an act to reduce to a uniform system the several laws for the instruction of youth in the public schools of this state, was laid on the table.[8] The enemies of the bill rejoiced and warned Mr. Kerney that he might see the beginning but that he could not see the end of this matter if he persisted in it,[9] and they further ventured to predict that if the bill passed, the whole system of public schools would be abandoned and no tax collected.[10]

[6] *Maryland Documents*, 1853 (*Doc.* K, pp. 27-28).
[7] *Clipper*, May 4, 1852 (A letter signed *Aristides*).
[8] *Journal of the House of Delegates*, 1852, p. 768.
[9] *Clipper*, May 6, 1852.
[10] *Clipper*, May 22, 1852.

In the municipal campaign of 1852, representative Catholics addressed the following letter to the candidates for the mayoralty:

The undersigned, on behalf of themselves and many of the citizens, desire to know prior to the next election for Mayor of the city:

1. Whether or not you are favorable to such a change in the present school laws as would secure a distribution of the school fund amongst all the schools and orphan asylums of this city, *pro rata* to the number of scholars, where the rate of charge is not greater than in the public schools of similar grade; or

2. Such a change as would secure to each taxpayer the right to select the particular schools to which his portion of the school tax should be paid (see Declaration of Rights, 1776, section 33).

3. And whether or not, if a bill affecting such changes in the present school law shall pass the City Council, you would give your assent to it, should you be elected to the Mayoralty of this city.

To prevent misapprehension for the future, the undersigned waive for the present all questions as to the constitutionalty of any school tax.

This letter was signed by B. R. Spalding, F. Neale, M. Courtney Jenkins, T. Parkin Scott.[11] The answers of both candidates were non-committal.[12] The day before the election it was alleged against France, the Whig candidate, that he had signed a memorial to Congress in favor of the Native American movement. Mr. France, on the morning of the election denied the charge[13] and was defeated. The *Clipper* attributed this defeat to the blending of the subject of religion with politics and to the prominent place which the proposed change in the public school law was made to occupy in political discussions.[14] The editors of the *Catholic Mirror* believed that on the common school question Catholics had not been fairly met nor their arguments refuted, and that although numbers of secular and sectarian journals abounded in denunciations of "Popery" in this and in other matters, they had recourse to none but the usual weapons of abuse and misrepresentation. Instead of an appeal to the judgment, there were appeals to bigotry and prejudice—hints at the designs of "Popery" to persecute innocent Protestants, to get possession of and control the revenues of the state, to place

[11] *Clipper*, October 1, 1852.
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] *American*, October 15, 1852.
[14] *Clipper*, October 15, 1852.

obstacles in the way of, and prevent the education of the people—to overturn republican institutions, to establish the Inquisition, and everything else that rancor, hatred, and injustice could suggest.[15]

On March 15, 1853, Mr. Kerney, Chairman of the Committee on Education, made to the legislature a report on the subject of general education.[16]

About a month later, April 11, 1853, a meeting was held in the Hall of the Maryland Institute, ostensiby for the purpose of discussing the school bill then before the legislature. The principal speakers were the clergymen of the several Protestant denominations, and the New York press noted that the tone of the meeting was too distinctly and exclusively anti-Catholic for the occasion.[17] Comments on the proceedings were to the effect that the question of public education was not so much the object of the speakers as to abuse and slander their Catholic fellow citizens. The ministers, without any invitation from the state, seemed to take the public schools under their protection, and in defending them were said to betray at once an equal amount of ignorance and malice.[18] The speeches misrepresented the claim of Catholics. The bill was stigmatized as a conspiracy against light, and denounced as an attempt to sectarianize the public schools and to unite the Church with the State. It was declared that it was plainly against the Bill of Rights, and that it was subversive of all government. It was further maintained that there were no objections to the public schools except from Catholics, and although no one had yet dared openly assail them, still there was a conspiracy everywhere active, insidiously to destroy them. However, it was said that in Ohio, Catholics had united with Protestants in reprobating this nefarious scheme, and it was hoped by the ministers that a like action would be taken in Maryland.[19]

Many of the citizens of Maryland thought that the speech of Dr. Plumer, a Presbyterian minister, would have told well had it been delivered in Philadelphia when the hideous shouts of the midnight

[15] *Catholic Mirror*, January 8, 1853.
[16] *Journal of the House of Delegates*, 1853, p. 330.
[17] *New York Daily Times*, April 14, 1853.
[18] *Clipper*, May 7, 1853 (A letter from a Georgetown University student).
[19] *Clipper*, April 12, 1853.

mob terrified the hearts of the Catholics,[20] and when the unchecked flames of burning churches drove back the darkness, and the anti-Catholic incendiary laughed in scorn at the weak arm of the law. This minister of the gospel stooped from the truth to characterize the Catholic claims as the movement of "foreign ecclesiastics." [21] He then read the following sentence from a document which he said was the pastoral of the Baltimore Provincial Council of 1849: "Moreover, we are disposed to doubt seriously whether the introduction of the sacred volume into the public schools as a class book is beneficial." He then added that he could prove that no Catholic could read the Bible without the permission of some priest, ecclesiastic or inquisition.[22]

Here it is proper to state that Dr. Plumer was reading from the pastoral of the Fourth Provincial Council held in Baltimore in 1840. It was the pastoral issued just after the introduction of the Bible into the public schools of Baltimore in 1839. From 1840 to 1853 three other Provincial Councils had been held. Furthermore, Dr. Plumer misquoted the text, which should read: "Moreover, we are disposed to doubt seriously whether the introduction of this sacred volume as an ordinary class book into schools is beneficial to religion." [23]

It would have been well if the speaker had read to his audience the whole pastoral. Many would have been enlightened, and some might have been able to understand the sentence which he had divorced from its context. But this will be treated at length in succeeding paragraphs.

Dr. Plumer's abuse of the Jesuits exhibited not his love for education, but a spirit of intolerance which, if carried into effect, would deprive Catholics of every vestige of civil liberty. In his characterization of those who had availed themselves of their boasted American privilege of remonstrating against unjust taxation, he forgot that he was speaking to a large and respectable body of American citizens, men who prided themselves on their adherence to the

[20] *Catholic Mirror*, April 16, 1853; Kirlin, *Catholicity in Philadelphia*, pp. 315 ff.

[21] *Catholic Mirror*, April 16, 1853.

[22] *Clipper*, April 12, 1853.

[23] *Pastoral, Fourth Provincial Council of Baltimore*, 1840, p. 15.

Constitution and the institutions of their common country—to citizens of Maryland who traced their ancestors to those whom religious intolerance had forced to take passage in the *Ark* and the *Dove*, and to others whose attachment to the country was sealed with an oath.[24]

The speeches of the other parsons likewise showed a deep-seated hostility to Catholics. A strong appeal was made to the audience to maintain the liberties of the country against the "designs of a foreign priesthood." The meeting closed with the reading of the following resolutions, which were carried by acclamation:

Resolved, That the bill reported to the Legislature to devote a portion of the public school funds to the support of sectarian irresponsible schools is a violation of our Bill of Rights, is based upon the gross absurdity that a citizen is not to be taxed for the public good, and if passed would destroy our system and every system of Free Public Education.

Resolved, That this conspiracy against the diffusion of knowledge among the people deserves the reprobation of every American citizen.

Resolved, That our Senators and Representatives be requested to crush forever this confederacy and to brand it with their indignant disapprobation.

Resolved, That a committee be forthwith appointed by the Chairman to repair to Annapolis to-morrow, to lay these resolutions before the Legislature as the sentiments of the people of Baltimore.[25]

Thus the meeting, convened to obtain an expression of opinion on the school bill, adjourned without any reference being made to the great principle involved in the controversy, namely, the justice of taxing one portion of the citizens for educating the children of the other.[26]

In the legislature, April 18, 1853, on motion of Mr. Kerney, a select committee of one from each county, not represented on the Committee on Education, was appointed to confer therewith,[27] and on the following day the Speaker announced the names of those appointed to act in conjunction with the Committee on Education

[24] *Catholic Mirror*, April 16, 1853.
[25] *Clipper*, April 12, 1853.
[26] *Catholic Mirror*, April 16, 1853.
[27] *Journal of the House of Delegates*, 1853, p. 551.

upon the bill entitled "an Act for the better regulation of the Public Schools of the State." [28] No report was returned from this committee.

There was a strong effort to make the school question a Catholic question. But the Catholics had not put themselves forward in the movement. In 1846, the General Assembly, the highest authority in the Presbyterian Church, had passed a resolution declaring that the public schools, as they existed generally in this country, were altogether inadequate to meet the wants of Christian society. Protestants of the German Reformed denominations were equally opposed to the Maryland system of education.[29] There were many others too who honestly questioned the principles on which the public schools were sustained,[30] and although the Catholics were eventually left alone to carry on the movement, it was because of the odium which the School Commissioners and the newspapers endeavored to affix to those who were supporting the bill. The city council was the first to succumb.

A number of petitions had been presented to the city council signed by Archbishop Kenrick and others praying for a change in the public school system.[31] The petitioners affirmed that from conscientious convictions of duty to those under their charge, they were unable to participate in the advantages of the public schools for whose support they were taxed. They did not propose to interfere with them or their management, but as they had erected at their own expense a number of schools in which four or five thousand children were taught, they prayed that body to grant them a portion of the school fund, or to allow them to designate to what particular school their tax should be appropriated. Their petition was based on Article 33, of the Declaration of Rights of the state of Maryland.[32]

On May 26, 1853, Mr. McJilton, from the joint committee on education appointed by the city council, presented a lengthy report

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 563.

[29] *The Metropolitan*, I, p. 188 (May, 1853).

[30] *Sun*, July 13, 1853; *Catholic Mirror*, April 23, 1853.

[31] *Clipper*, May 18, 19, 1853. *Journal First Branch City Council*, 1853, p. 545.

[32] *Catholic Mirror*, June 4, 1853.

relative to the petitions of Archbishop Kenrick and other citizens, in which it was stated that after a thorough examination of the subject of the public school system and the objections urged against it, the committee had come to the conclusion that it would be most injudicious, if not absolutely dangerous, to adopt the requirements of the memorial and approbate the prayer of the petitioners. It was further stated that it was quite apparent that the letter and spirit of the memorial were from the heart of a foreigner,[33] and showed how incompetent was the author, both by birth and education, to understand the genius of American institutions, or to account for the great fact that a government can be conducted, as is that of the United States, without the union of Church and State—while the interests of both are sedulously protected.[34]

The committee was not content with reporting against the prayers of these petitioners but stepped aside to assail the Catholic Church, to outrage the feelings of every Catholic and to offer an insult to one whose piety and learning had caused him to be raised to the head of the American hierarchy.[35] Fair-minded men pronounced this report to be without parallel in the history of legislative proceedings in the country, filled as it was with gratuitous charges and insulting reflections upon the religious belief of a large part of the citizens of Maryland.[36] Catholics who had always prided themselves on the history of Maryland, and whose ancestors for generations were to the manor born, were told by one Mr. McJilton that they were only *foreigners* unworthy of appreciating the institutions of the country.[37] Had the report even the merit of originality, some respect might have been entertained for the chairman, but it was found to be largely taken from the sectarian papers of the day,[38] proving what had been so often said at that time, that the parsons

[33] *The Metropolitan*, I, p. 283, says: "It was written by a gentleman whose family for three generations back were of American birth, and who himself has no need of instruction from the members of the committee to understand what is American or what is anti-American."

[34] *Clipper*, May 30, 1853.

[35] *Catholic Mirror*, June 4, 1853.

[36] *Catholic Mirror*, June 18, 1853.

[37] *Catholic Mirror*, June 4, 1853.

[38] *Ibid.* (Plagiarism from *New York Christian Advocate*, May 19, 1853).

were the rulers in the matter.[39] The committee concluded the report by saying that it would be unsafe, unwise, and unjust to interfere with the existing system of public schools, and offered the resolution that the committee be discharged from further consideration of the subject.[40]

The secret political forces at work against the bill came out into the open about the time of the fall elections. As early as March 12, 1853, an appeal had been made in Baltimore for the organization of the United Sons of America,[41] an organization whose object was to sustain against all obstacles the principles of the Nativist party as it existed in 1844.[42] The following article signed by the United Sons of America as an advertisement in the *Clipper,* May 10, 1853, clearly shows the aim of that Order:

God and Our Native Land. *Foreigners will render our Elections a curse instead of a blessing.* Never since the moment these significant words fell from the lips of Ex-President Van Buren has the truth been more apparent than at the present time. We continually see the two great parties of our country making concessions to the foreign power in our midst of a nature degrading to the American character and all to obtain votes on election day. It was by this degrading policy that men were placed in nomination last fall, and sent to our Legislature who have proven themselves like the viper which stung the bosom of its benefactor—servants of Pius IX, John Hughes, and all papal Rome instead of servants of their master—the American people. To Americans we appeal. Will you have such men to make your laws—the handiwork of foreign Jesuitism, or will you have your own countrymen to make your laws and execute them? If the latter be your choice, then enlist under the red, white, and blue banner of Native American principles and fight valiantly for those rights, for which Shifler and his seven compatriots fell martyrs in the blood-stained street of Kensington.[43]

On October 1, 1853, the United Sons of America addressed the

[39] *Ibid.*

[40] *Clipper,* May 30, 1853.

[41] *Ibid.,* March 12, 1853.

[42] Whitney, *A Defence of the American Policy,* p. 315.

[43] *Catholic Herald,* xii, May 9, 1844, to Sept. 5, 1844. Lee, *The Origin and Progress of the American Party in Politics,* p. 55.

following circular letter to the various candidates for members of the city council. The voters were urged to ponder well on the purport of the letter and see whether they would cast their votes in the next election for those candidates who returned negative answers, or who refused to answer at all.

Baltimore, October 1, 1853.

Sir—At a meeting of the Maryland Camp No. 1, United Sons of America, held on Tuesday evening, 27ult., the undersigned were appointed a committee to learn your views, as well of those of all other candidates for public favor, upon the system of Public Education in this city. We pursue this course in order that Americans may not act unadvisedly in the coming contest and vote for the downfall of the proudest pillar of our republic—the system of popular education.

The following queries are presented to you, with the hope that you will meet them with a prompt and decisive answer at an early day:

1st.—Are you, or are you not, in favor of a bill introduced at the last session of our Legislature—a bill commonly known as "Kerney's School bill," and having for its object a serious alteration of our present public school system of education?

2nd—Are you, or are you not, in favor of exempting the members of any religious sect from payment of their quota of the school tax; because as they affirm they derive no benefit from it—seeing proper to exclude themselves therefrom and train up their offspring under sectarian influence and instruction?

3rd—Will you, or will you not, if elected to represent your Ward in the Council of the city, use your utmost endeavors to carry out to its fullest extent the design of the originators of that law by withholding the appropriations necessary for their successful management?

4th—Will you, or will you not, if elected to the Council of the city appoint such persons only to office of School Commissioner as are publicly known to be in favor of the present school system?

Hoping to hear from you at an early day, we remain with great respect

W. J. HAMILL
M. P. BEAUFORT
JOHN MCNEIR
Committee.[44]

Again on November 1, 1853, the interrogating committee

[44] *Sun*, October 8, 1853.

appointed by Camp No. 1, United Sons of America, appeared before the public for the purpose of making their report and urging upon Americans the necessity of united effort in endeavoring to elect those men who would seek to promote the public school system. Since the legislature was said to be the place whence the danger was likely to emanate, the committee argued that if all Americans would cast off the shackles of party for one day and elect only good reliable men the "jesuitical intrigues of the enemies of our country" need never be feared. The committee presented the names and views of the persons who had declared their opposition to the Kerney Bill and they were accordingly endorsed by the United Sons of America. They were found to be the Temperance candidates, while those who had refused to consider the question, and who were said to be pledged to bring their influence to bear in favor of the Kerney or a similar bill were the candidates on the Democratic legislative ticket.[45]

The election returns showed that the Democratic candidate for Governor received a majority in Baltimore of more than three thousand over his Whig opponent, while the Democratic legislative ticket was defeated by almost a thousand. The *Argus* was of the opinion that the absence of a Whig ticket for the legislature was one of the causes of the success of the Maine Law ticket, and that the nomination of young and inexperienced men by the Democratic party was another.[46] The United Sons of America did not enter into the question in any other part of the state, with the result that straight-out Whigs and Democrats were elected from the counties. The two parties were about equally divided in the House of Delegates with the ten delegates from Baltimore holding the balance of power.[47]

Since the Kerney School Bill has been enumerated as one of the causes of the success of the Know-Nothing party in Maryland[48] and accordingly branded a "conspiracy against the diffusion of knowledge among the people," an interference of the Catholic Church in politics to obtain a portion of the school fund, and an

[45] *Clipper*, November 1, 1853.
[46] *Clipper*, November 8, 1853.
[47] *Sun*, November 5, 1853.
[48] Schmeckebier, *History of the Know Nothing Party in Maryland*, p. 69.

attempt to sectarianize the public schools,[49] it is well to know facts pertaining to this matter.

First of all, every phase of the Kerney Bill and of the report on education [50] that apparently caused so much surprise and excitement in Baltimore, and which some considered innovations, had been freely discussed in the Maryland constitutional convention of 1850-1851. The great need of reform in the schools, the necessity of establishing a general system of public schools,[51] the unfair distribution and maladministration of school funds [52] had been considered at great length, and even the much maligned 26th section had its counterpart in the debates of that convention.[53]

As to the charge that the bill might destroy the educational system of the state, it must be remembered that there was no general state system of public schools established in Maryland until the year 1865.[54] One of the members of the convention of 1850-1851 had said in the debates that "in this the nineteenth century," he as a Marylander, felt debased by the idea that nearly every state had a system of education, while Maryland had a mere local organization of county schools.[55]

The deplorable condition of the schools, even four years after the Kerney Bill had been introduced, is set forth in that part of the Governor's Message to the Assembly, January 4, 1856, which refers to education:

> The system of public instruction in Maryland (if we except the city of Baltimore . . .) is in a state of the most utter and hopeless prostration. Our plan of public instruction must be constructed anew; made uniform in its operations throughout the State, supported more liberally by State and country resources, and above all, it should be made subject to some controlling, supervisory power, through whom all its operations should be annually communicated and made public, or it will fail to meet the exigency of our condition or be attended with any public benefit.[56]

[49] *Clipper*, April 12, 1853.
[50] *Maryland Documents*, 1853 (*Doc.* K).
[51] *Debates*, I, pp. 339, 431; II, pp. 808, 811.
[52] *Ibid.*, I, pp. 425-7, 431; II, pp. 344, 805.
[53] *Ibid.*, II, p. 812.
[54] Steiner, *History of Education in Maryland*, p. 66.
[55] *Debates*, II, p. 811. [56] *Maryland Documents*, 1856 (*Doc.* A, pp. 13-14).

The following quotation from the *By-Laws for the Government of the Boards of School Commissioners of Maryland,* 1865, confirms what is said in the Governor's Message:

> It is wise to investigate the causes of the inefficiency of the various systems of Public Schools heretofore enforced in our State. We are now behind the times, and in no grade of Public Instruction can we compare favorably with the younger States. Most of our Academies are little better than Grammar Schools. Our Colleges are provided with a full corps of Professors, but exhibit small catalog of students. The fault has been with the old system of primary instruction.[57]

The school system of Baltimore, proclaimed a most perfect system by Mr. Kerney's enemies in 1852, is not considered in the same light in 1866. The report for that year, in part, is as follows:

> At present the Schools of Baltimore City are conducted in direct opposition to the Act of Assembly . . . According to my judgment, Baltimore, strictly speaking, has no well defined EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, she has a congregation of schools regulated in external matters by a system of by-laws, many highly competent and zealous teachers, but no Educational System. There is no central educational authority; no provision for active supervision beyond that which a Commissioner without a recompense, voluntarily bestows; in fact nothing that is uniform, unless it be the uniform rejection of the Spelling Book and the consequent absence of all uniformity of pronunciation.[58]

In the school bill, Mr. Kerney had shown the increase in illiteracy in Maryland from 1840 to 1850.[59] The Natives attributed this increase to immigration.[60] But immigration could not be held entirely responsible for this condition, especially in those counties

[57] *By-Laws for the Government of School Commissioners of Maryland,* 1865, p. vii.

[58] *First Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to the Governor of Maryland,* 1866, pp. 16, 18.

[59] *Maryland Census of 1840:* 11,817 white persons, over twenty years of age unable to read or write.

Maryland Census of 1850: 20,815 white persons over twenty years of age unable to read or write.

Maryland Documents, 1853 (Doc. K, p. 5).

[60] *Clipper,* April 29, 1852.

without an urban population. The census of 1850 shows very few foreigners in the rural counties,[61] while the *First Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to the Governor of Maryland* in 1866 reveals the fact that illiteracy flourished rather in the rural counties than in those with an urban population.[62]

In the report on education in Maryland, presented to the legislature, March 15, 1853, the committee stated that as the design of the state in providing a school fund was the diffusion of knowledge and the education of the children of her citizens, especially those of the poor and the needy, it was much to be regretted that no provision had heretofore been made for the education of orphans, a class of children which, above all others, needed the fostering care of the state. They were a class whose peculiar situation did not permit them to attend the public schools, and as a result they were denied the privileges extended to others, and deprived of the advantages of education. It was pointed out that thousands of the children of Maryland were left to depend on public charity not only for their food and raiment, but also for their education. The 26th section proposed to meet this condition by giving for the education of the destitute orphan a portion of the taxes paid for educational purposes.

The report further showed that for a long time the voice of complaint had been heard against the public schools;[63] not so much against the system itself as against the manner in which it had been conducted in certain localities of the state. Thousands of Marylanders, seeing that their complaints were disregarded and that the school system still presented features repugnant to their feelings "as Christians and as men," had established schools for the education of their own children, and although they paid their taxes for the support of the public schools, they would not participate in the advantages they bestowed so long as the advantages could be reached only at the sacrifice of other and higher obligations which they owed to their children, and with a zeal worthy of the cause of edu-

[61] *History and Statistics of Maryland*, 1850, pp. 21, 46 ff.
Gazetteer of the State of Maryland, 1852, p. 51.

[62] *First Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to the Governor of Maryland*, 1866, pp. 36, 38, 60, 82.

[63] *Debates*, I, p. 431; II, p. 808.

cation they had voluntarily imposed upon themselves an additional tax for the support of their own schools. In the city of Baltimore alone these schools, known as "free schools," exceeded at that time thirty in number and compared favorably with any class of schools in the city. They were conducted on principles similar to those of the public schools, their doors were thrown open to the public, and thousands of children were gratuitously taught in the various branches of useful science and instructed in the principles of morality.[64]

Because the bill proposed to give a portion of the taxes for the support of such schools, Mr. Kerney was accused of betraying the interests of Baltimore and denounced as aiming at the destruction of popular education and of breaking up the school system in order that instructors in charity sectarian schools might receive a larger compensation.[65]

The doctrine which Mr. Kerney advocated was not new. For a considerable period after the Revolution, Catholic schools in many places were, along with the schools of other denominations, supported from the public funds. "This was the case in Lowell, Mass., from 1835 to 1852. In the city of New York, it was also the case until the year 1824."[66] This same doctrine was engrafted as a cherished principle in the common school law of Pennsylvania.[67] It was practiced in several counties of Maryland, and had been universally acknowledged by the state in her custom of making annual appropriations for the support of private academies.[68] An Act especially relating to Frederick county, passed February 21, 1840, provided that the trustees "have power to apply the school funds for the various purposes as their judgment dictate." Each county received from the state treasury $800 for an academy, but in Frederick county $400 more was allowed for Rev. John McElroy's school.[69] At one time the school fund belonging to Frederick City

[64] *Maryland Documents*, 1853 (*Doc.* K, pp. 12-13).

[65] *Clipper*, May 4, 1852.

[66] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, XIII, p. 583; Burns, *The Catholic School System in the United States*, pp. 360 ff.

[67] *Debates*, II, p. 806.

[68] Steiner, *History of Education in Maryland*, p. 52.

[69] Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, p. 434.

was divided between a Protestant charity school and the school kept by the Sisters of Charity.[70] In 1860, there was legislation in Maryland in favor of giving $1500 *per annum* to a Methodist Female School in Baltimore.[71] In Maryland, even in 1866, the new law continued state donations to St. John's College, Washington College, the Agricultural College, and the Baltimore Female College, while it appropriated nothing for institutions equally as important.[72]

Catholics regarded the existing mode of distributing the school fund as unjust, and availed themselves of their constitutional right to agitate and exploit a remedy for grievances which bore heavily on their purses and consciences. But this right was questioned by their enemies who, in defending their own position, invaded the sphere of religion, and inflamed the passions of the people, thereby perpetuating strife and bitterness. Catholics were assailed and goaded on with insolent suspicion, their political integrity was questioned, and their official fidelity impugned. Now, it is averred that their object is to destroy the public schools so that Catholic institutions might be filled with the children of the poor, and thus the tenets of the Catholic religion diffused more generally throughout the community,[73] then, again, they were said to have no commiseration for those in ignorance, and were alarmed only because of the fear of losing their influence over the unshackled minds of those acquiring an education in the common schools, and it was for this reason, declared their enemies, that Catholics

> . . . in secret conclave at Baltimore in the spring of 1852, resolved to make a united attack upon the system of free schools from Maine to Alabama—from ocean to ocean. During the ensuing winter the attack was made. In California alone, they have been successful. The Catholics boast that the battle commenced shall continue until victory shall perch upon their standards and the whole fabric of free schools shall be leveled to the ground.[74]

[70] *Clipper*, April 2, 1853.

[71] *Catholic Mirror*, February 4, 1860.

[72] *First Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to the Governor of Maryland*, 1866, p. 64.

[73] *Sun*, July 13, 1853.

[74] Fulton, *The Outlook of Freedom*, p. 253.

In what this attack consisted or how it was executed, the author does not state.

It was the First Plenary Council of Baltimore that assembled May 9, 1852. Forty years before, the first Archbishop of Baltimore had sat informally in consultation with his three suffragans; now his successor beheld around him five archbishops and twenty-four bishops, who were building up the Church of God from the Atlantic to the Pacific beneath the flag of the United States.[75] It was this marvelous growth of the Church which caused the alarm of her enemies. Among the twenty-five decrees of the Council there were those that strenuously insisted upon the establishment of a school at every church.[76]

The special topics of the *Pastoral Letter of 1852* were those of ecclesiastical authority and Catholic education. The part relating to education was as follows:

> Encourage the establishment and support of Catholic schools; make every sacrifice which may be necessary for this object; spare our hearts the pain of beholding the youth whom, after the example of our Master, whom we so much love, involved in all the evils of an uncatholic education, evils too multiplied and too obvious to require that we should do more than raise our voices in solemn protest against the system from which they spring. In urging on you the discharge of this duty, we are acting on the suggestion of the Sovereign Pontiff, who in an encyclical letter, dated 21 Nov., 1851, calls on all the Bishops of the Catholic world, to provide for the religious education of youth.[77]

The editors of the *Clipper,* no doubt, were referring to the encyclical when they spoke of the public school system as having up to that time been approved by all denominations, and the discovery that it did injustice to any religious sect, never originated in Baltimore nor probably in the United States.[78]

The first authoritative declaration of the Church in the United

[75] Shea, *A History of the Catholic Church in the United States,* 1844 to 1866, p. 367.

[76] *Ibid.,* p. 370.

[77] Guilday, *The National Pastorals of the American Hierarchy, 1792-1919,* p. 191.

[78] *Clipper,* April 25, 1853.

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States on the subject of Catholic schools had been made in the First Council of Baltimore, 1829.[79] Decree XXXIV urged, where possible, the erection of Catholic schools to save the children, especially those of the poor from perversion.[80] There was at that time a steadily increasing current of thought hostile to Catholics in this country, nurtured mainly by publications from the British Isles, a strong anti-Catholic literature evoked by the agitation in favor of Catholic Emancipation. Many of these attacks were printed here and widely circulated with the result that old prejudices were revived.[81]

About the same time, in the fall of 1829, the first public school in Baltimore was opened in the basement of the Presbyterian church on Eutaw Street.[82] In 1852, the Presbyterians opened a mission school also in a basement.[83]

A letter in which a Georgetown University student repelled the attack made on April 11, 1853, by the ministers on the Jesuits and their teaching, and which was published in a Baltimore newspaper at that time, contains several significant statements:

> Had Jesuits applied for professorships in the public schools or for the location of primary schools in the basements of their churches, they might, with some show of reason, be accused of attempting to control those schools. Parsons—innocent and undesigning men,—can do all this, but of course nobody suspects them of having in view any other, than the interest of the State, for the protection of which, it would appear, our patriotic parsons think the civil authority incompetent.[84]

It was these same ministers who were much concerned in keeping before the people that part of the 8th section of the school bill which read:

> And be it enacted, That it shall be the Duty of the Board of School Commissioners of the several counties and of the city of Baltimore, to

[79] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, XIII, p. 580.

[80] Shea, *A History of the Catholic Church in the United States*, 1808-1843, p. 416.

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 420.

[82] Scharf, *History of Baltimore*, p. 225.

[83] Smith, *Eighty Years*, p. 45.

[84] *Clipper*, May 7, 1853.

select and purchase books . . . but no book of a sectarian character . . . shall be used in said Schools; . . .[85]

This section was said to be an attempt to exclude the Bible from the schools. The following editorial is typical of those appearing in the newspapers inimical to the bill:

Mr. Kerney again displayed his dislike of the *Bible* by again proscribing it as a 'sectarian book,' which is to be forever excluded from the public schools. If the bill was unobjectionable in every other respect, this feature of it ought to be sufficient to kill it in the House. . . . It is only by inculcating the moral precepts of the Bible into the minds of the people in conjunction with the usual primary and academic course of studies, that the people can be fully qualified to enjoy, preserve and defend those inestimable Religious and civil liberties which have been transmitted to us by our Puritan forefathers.[86]

The Bible had been used in the public schools of Maryland for many years. It was in March, 1839, after mature deliberation and much discussion that a resolution had been adopted allowing its use "as a reading book" in all of the schools. Teachers were instructed in all cases to allow the Douay edition to be used by those children whose parents preferred it to the common translation.[87] This had been the work of the American Bible Society which had indicated that the "spirit of Popery which every where suppresses the Word of God" had been the chief reason up to that time, of the exclusion of the Bible from the schools.[88] The resolutions presented by the Rev. Robert J. Breckinridge, and unanimously adopted by the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Bible Society on April 18, 1839, throw light on the No-Popery agitation that marked the succeeding years:

1. *Resolved,* That this Board has learned through the monthly re-

[85] *Maryland Documents,* 1853 (*Doc.* K, p. 21).
[86] *The Star* (Easton, Md.), March 29, 1853.
[87] Scharf, *History of Baltimore,* p. 226.
[88] Breckinridge, *A Plea for the Restoration of the Scriptures to the Schools,* p. 5.

port of the Corresponding Secretary, with devout gratitude to Almighty God, that the Bible has been introduced by the proper authorities, into the Public Schools of the city of Baltimore, as one of their regular reading books.

2. That this Board records with thankfulness and deep humility its sense of the great honor put on them by the Lord, in having used their feeble agency in the work which has had so speedy and happy an issue.

3. That we find in this affecting token of divine favor, a great encouragement to proceed with renewed vigor in the general work committed to us: and more especially, in the important business of restoring the Bible as a class book to all the schools of our commonwealth.[89]

The Commissioners of Public Schools in their *28th Annual Report to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore,* December 31, 1856, devoted several pages to the subject, "Religious Instruction in Public Schools." In introducing the subject, they said:

The importance of the subject to the cause of education generally, renders it necessary that some notice should be taken of the matter in this report, especially as it is believed that the controversy that now agitates a number of religious communities of the land, commenced in our city.

It was further stated in the report that the whole argument was based upon the fact that there was no religious training in the common schools of the country, and the principal feature in the argument was that without religious training, education only prepares the human mind for the performance of greater evil. The morality of religion, which the Commissioners declared consisted in the principles of religious truths, as they are drawn from the Bible, was said to be taught in the public schools of Baltimore in the following manner:

. . . in the use of the Bible, and in the use of such text-books as base their morality on the Bible. And the Bible is used in our schools both in its character as an official record and as a Class Book.

[89] *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

A chapter or part of a chapter is read at the opening of each session of the schools and the pupils use it in their classes as a Reading Book . . . The first lessons imparted to pupils in the Public Schools consist of simple narratives and illustrations, in some instances, consist of events in the lives of individuals and precepts taken from the Bible itself.[90]

In Maryland, at that time there were about twenty different religious denominations,[91] each founded upon its own construction of the word of God. Because of these numerous sects and the many different translations of the Bible, it can be readily understood that if each teacher of the state were authorized to use any translation he might think proper, or if all would confine themselves to a particular translation, the constitution of the state of Maryland would be violated.[92]

To the Catholic, the Bible is neither a schoolbook, a ritual, nor a popular treatise on theology.[93] The Pastoral of the Fourth Provincial Council of Baltimore, 1840, clearly sets forth the attitude of the Church toward the Bible and Bible reading in the schools. If the following excerpt from that document had been read by the ministers in connection with the sentence which they declared to be the "secret" of the Kerney School Bill, many difficulties would have disappeared and the Catholic position in respect to the Bible in the school would have been better understood:

In our country it is assumed by the larger portion of our fellow-citizens, that versions of the Bible, not sustained by that evidence which we require, are the word of God; and moreover, that all individuals and all Churches are liable to error in declaring its meaning, and they admit, as the mode by which we shall learn what God has taught, the opinions, conjectures and judgment of each individual, for himself—all which upon the ground that we have set forth is subversive of the purity of doctrine and the unity of faith; and the admission of which

[90] *28th An. Rep. of the Board of Com. of Pub. Schools of Baltimore,* 1857.

[91] *Gazetteer of the State of Maryland,* 1852, p. 49.

[92] *Declaration of Rights,* Art. 33.

[93] Shea, *A Bibliographical Account of Catholic Bibles, Testaments, and other Portions of the Scripture,* p. 3.

would be a dereliction of duty. It is moreover generally prevalent that in public schools, some one of those versions should be read by the children as the word of God, and frequently that the teacher who is an unauthorised individual, should give his own opinions as its proper interpretation, and that the child should be habituated practically to the principle, that it is the right of each individual to use his own private judgment, and not the public testimony of the Church as the standard of interpretation; whence you will at once perceive, the total opposition of the principle on which such schools are conducted, to the unchangeable doctrines and discipline of our Church.

We are desirous that all under our charge should be as well acquainted with the doctrine found in the Holy Scriptures as with any other portion of the word of God, we also highly approve of their being familiar with the edifying histories and admirable moral instruction which abound therein, we therefore recommend that the authorised version be found in the houses of the faithful, and that portions of it be frequently read with the veneration which it so well deserves, and meditated upon for the purpose of becoming better acquainted with the providential ways of the Lord, for the amendment of life, for the edification of the well disposed and for the encouragement of virtue. We desire that at an early period, children should be instructed in the Sacred History, that they may be acquainted with the nature and value of the divine volume, that they be gradually brought to its perusal with docile hearts, and that in place of allowing them an indiscriminate use of that which is difficult and liable to gross misconstruction, together with what is simple and edifying, they be judiciously led by proper selections, under discreet and pious guides, to the right use of this rich treasure. Moreover, we are disposed to doubt seriously whether the introduction of this sacred volume as an ordinary class book into schools, is beneficial to religion. It is thereby exposed to that irreverent familiarity, which is calculated to produce more contempt than veneration; it is placed side by side with mere human productions, with the fables of mythology and the speculations of a vain philosophy: it is thus too often made the subject of a vulgar jest, it sinks to the level of task-books, and shares the aversion and the remarks which are generally bestowed upon them by children. If the authorised version be used in a school, it should be under circumstances very different from those which are usually found in the public institutions of our States, and this shows the necessity of your better exertions to establish and to uphold seminaries and schools, fitted according to our own principles,

for the education of the children who are daily rising up, and numbers of whom are lost for want of such institutions.[94]

It would not be difficult to imagine how the program of "religious training," as outlined in the Commissioners' Report of 1856, must have been carried out when records show that often directors of the public schools of Maryland were illiterate,[95] that there was little or no supervision,[96] and that the teachers generally were poorly qualified to teach at all.[97] Moreover, many of the textbooks were sectarian and contained much that was offensive and hurtful to Catholic feelings and morals,[98] so much so, indeed, that this very fact had been noted as early as 1840:

There is another evil of which we have still to complain. We can scarcely point out a book in general use in the ordinary schools, or even in higher seminaries, wherein covert and insidious efforts are not made to misrepresent our principles, to distort our tenets, to vilify our practices and to bring contempt upon our Church and its members.[99]

Add to this the attitude of the Commissioners toward the two versions of the Bible used in the Maryland schools which is shown in the following statement: "The difference is so slight that they can be used without difficulty in the same class," [100] and the fact that out of 263 teachers only 45 or 50 were Catholics,[101] and it can be readily seen that the schools were controlled entirely by the enemies of the Catholic Church, and that Protestant doctrine was openly taught in them.[102]

[94] *Pastoral Letter of the Fourth Provincial Council of Baltimore,* 1840, pp. 14-15.

[95] *First Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to the Governor of Maryland,* 1866, pp. 32, 41, 69.

[96] *Ibid.,* pp. 35, 49, 58, 64, 76, 84.

[97] *Ibid.,* pp. 34, 35, 41, 57, 64, 67, 68, 74, 80, 82.

[98] *Clipper,* May 4, 1853.

[99] *Pastoral Letter of the Fourth Provincial Council of Baltimore,* 1840, p. 15.

[100] *28th An. Rep. of the Com. of Pub. Schools,* Baltimore, 1856, p. 47.

[101] *Clipper,* May 30, 1853.

[102] O'Shea, *The Two Archbishops Kenrick,* p. 178.

It is not, therefore, surprising to find that the attempt in 1853 to obtain a just modification of the public school system in Maryland failed, and that the intolerant majority insisted that the schools must be under Protestant influence, and that Catholics, who had founded the state, had no right to a voice in either the management or the teaching of its schools.[103]

A review of the economic, social, and political conditions forming the background to the agitation of this period, emphasizes the serious situation in which Catholics were placed and in which their liberties were threatened.

[103] Shea, *A History of the Catholic Church in the United States*, 1844-1866, pp. 371-372.

CHAPTER IV

A Border State—Its Making and Unmaking

Because of its influence on man's economic life, natural environment goes far to determine his social and political point of view. No instance of this influence is more remarkable than that furnished in the history of Maryland.

The study of Maryland's physical geography may, indeed, be said to be a Marylander's best culture. The soil, the climate, the configuration of this state as well as her bearing to other territory have constituted the elementary points of her social and economic history, of the political conduct of her inhabitants and the formation of the public will.

A line drawn from Washington to Baltimore and on toward Wilmington, Delaware,—the famous "Fall Line," cuts the state of Maryland into two almost equal portions and marks the point of contact between two regions of very different geological age and physical composition,—the ancient Piedmont, and the recent Coastal Plain, commonly known as Tidewater Maryland.

It is in the Tidewater region, where the Chesapeake embays the Plain, cutting it into two parts, distinguished from early colonial times as the Eastern and the Western Shore, that Maryland's history begins. As the settlers sailed up the Bay in 1634, the choice of the Western Shore rather than the Eastern was doubtless due to the uninviting aspect of the flat marshes on the right. At St. Mary's, in Southern Maryland, the shores rose bold from the harbor, and the bordering terrace offered a favorable site for building and cultivation; the sandy loams were exceedingly conducive to the growth of tobacco, the policy of England fostered its cultivation, the Bay and its tributaries brought transportation facilities to the very doors, so Maryland followed Virginia in making tobacco her money crop. Values were expressed in it, prosperity or failure depended upon its price abroad, it determined the labor of the colony. Tobacco needed much hand labor, thus slavery fastened itself on the colony. Because tobacco quickly exhausted the soil the planters held large tracts of land instead of small farms, so

all the economic phenomena of tobacco-raising Virginia occurred also in tobacco-raising Maryland.

Before colonial history was far advanced, Tidewater Maryland, because of its early settlement and the easy access by water to its various parts, assumed a well-civilized aspect with a white population English in blood and custom. With its few and small towns and its isolation from the routes of travel from the seaboard toward the West, it escaped the rush of foreign immigration with the result that its increase has been largely internal, and its people have remained remarkably true to the type of original settlers. Ninety-two *per cent.* of the two hundred thousands whites in 1910 were native-born of native parents, in most cases, of old English stock.[1]

It was fully a century after the settlement of Maryland before the western frontier advanced beyond the head of Tidewater. In 1732, the western part of the Province seems for the first time to have attracted the attention of the proprietor, who offered liberal inducements to anyone who would settle there. Many of the wealthy citizens of Tidewater Maryland speedily took advantage of this offer and thus acquired large tracts of land.[2] A few years later, the southward course of the Irish, many of them Protestants, and the Germans down the Great Valley from Pennsylvania into Maryland and through the gaps in the Blue Ridge out into the Piedmont region, brought a population which required in 1784 the organization of Frederick county which comprised at that time three-fourths of the land area of Maryland.[3]

With these new elements, the development of a distinctly different form of agriculture was made possible. To the German immigrants from Pennsylvania and the Palatinate, however, must be ascribed the largest share of honor in that wonderful development of the fertile plains and valleys of Western Maryland which has added so much to the general growth and prosperity of the state.[4] Mr. Dulany, convinced that the exclusive cultivation of tobacco was a disease slowly but surely draining the economic life blood of the

[1] Lefferts, *Tidewater Maryland*, p. 21.
[2] Williams, *History of Frederick County*, p. 1.
[3] Greene, *Provincial America* (*Am. Nation*, VI, p. 247).
[4] Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, I, p. 59.

Province, used every effort to increase the immigration of a class of settlers devoted to general agriculture.[5]

Thus a new and most important era opened in the history of Maryland. Previously, there had been no doubt concerning her alliance with the South in her economic and political life. This new and alien influence tended to join the Province closer to Pennsylvania, and as Western Maryland become more and more populous, and as the city of Baltimore grew in commercial importance, there came to be a doubt in the minds of geographers whether Maryland should be called a Middle or a Southern State.[6]

Life in Western Maryland was quite different from life on the plantations of the Chesapeake. The great body of settlers in the West cultivated comparatively small farms without slaves, for the most part, and produced wheat instead of tobacco. The Germans brought with them their own language and habits, and tended to form on the frontiers communities with interests quite different from those on the seaboard. To develop settlements on the frontier, the royal government tolerated the staunch Presbyterianism of the Scotch-Irish as well as the many forms of religion which the Germans had brought with them.[7] The English settlers who had preceded the Germans to Western Maryland kept the plantation system, as far as possible, and had many slaves to work their large tracts of land. They kept also the religion established by royal decree in 1692—the religion of the Church of England.[8]

By 1774, the majority of the people of Maryland lived in the Western part of the Province within the limits of what was then Frederick county, and of these, by far the greater number were the Germans who had come down from Pennsylvania and their descendants. Thus at the close of the eighteenth century, Maryland was divided into two areas presenting contrasted economic and social conditions—on one side, Tidewater planters cultivating large crops of tobacco—on the other, small farmers raising livestock, wheat and corn. To the former region belonged the slave, the aristocracy, the

[5] Sioussat, *Economics and Politics in Maryland, 1720-1750*, p. 54.
[6] Steiner, *Western Maryland in the Revolution*, p. 5.
[7] Greene, *Provincial America* (*Am. Nation*, VI, p. 236).
[8] Williams, *History of Frederick County*, p. 11.

established Church of England; in the latter, were found free labor, a composite population, and religious toleration for all but Catholics.

As has been seen, from an early period, German immigrants seem to have manifested a preference for Pennsylvania and Maryland. These Provinces were especially the favorite goal of German Protestants.[9] The Maryland legislature, in 1778, passed an act by which all foreigners, upon taking the oath of allegiance to the state, were naturalized and admitted to all the rights of citizenship, except that of holding civil offices. As an inducement to immigration, circulars were printed in English and in other languages, setting forth the advantages which Maryland presented to those who wished to establish themselves in the new world, and distributed in England and Germany. These efforts to give a direction to the stream of immigration which might reasonably be expected upon the return of peace, were doubtless successful, as is indicated by the surprisingly rapid increase of immigrants arriving between the end of the Revolutionary War and the year 1790. During that contest, a considerable number of Germans in the British armies abandoned the cause and settled in the state.

Although there are but few authentic details of the accession to population in any section of the United States prior to 1819, when the collectors of customs were first required by law to make returns of the number of foreign passengers arriving at their respective ports, there is no doubt that many Germans sought a home within the borders of Maryland before that date, landing either at Baltimore or coming through Pennsylvania. The former were attracted to Maryland by the extensive tobacco trade which was carried on between Baltimore and the German cities of the Baltic;[10] the latter settled at first in the vicinity of Philadelphia, but gradually advanced westward and soon spread over the southern counties of Pennsylvania and crossed the border into Maryland.[11] It was not, however, until after the year 1730, that any considerable number of Germans settled in Maryland.[12] Up to that time, Maryland had been a southern colony in every respect, but now the process began

[9] Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, I, p. 61.

[10] *Gazetteer of the State of Maryland*, 1852, pp. 25, 28, 29.

[11] Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, p. 61.

[12] Nead, *The Pennsylvania-German in the Settlement of Maryland*, p. 51.

which made her a border state, for the ties of the Germans were with the Pennsylvanians rather than with the Virginians.[13]

Between the years 1820 and 1850, the aggregate immigration into Baltimore was 134,266 but no means now exist for determining with certainty how many of these immigrants settled in Maryland. Much the larger portion of this immigration consisted of Germans. The proportion between that class and all other foreign passengers in 1850 was about 60 *per centum,* and of the 53,750 persons among the population in 1850, born out of the United States, 26,936 were natives of Germany.[14]

Although the German element in this country had been from early colonial times numerically strong, still it had not exercised a noticeably direct influence on the political and social life of the country, until the advent of a class of refugees who became officers of the Teutonic hosts.

From the end of the Revolutionary War until the War of 1812 there was but little immigration from Germany. This resulted in a speedy amalgamation of the German residents with the native population. After the general peace following the Napoleonic era, a new stream of immigration set in. Most of these immigrants, like the first, were ignorant and poor. However, the beginning of the third decade saw an increasing number of well-to-do country people coming to take up farms in the West. This was really the beginning of German immigration on a large scale, and may be attributed to two causes, namely, the political disturbances in Germany and the publication of Gottfried Duden's *Bericht von einer Reise nach den westlichen Staaten.*[15]

This new political immigration came in more or less closely organized bodies and consequently did not disappear in the native population. With them were university men who had been compelled to flee from their country because of some political offence. These controlled the unthinking peasant, and were the ones directly responsible for the various doctrinaire schemes which already in the thirties began to show themselves in the different parts of the United States. These leaders seemed to have been imbued

[13] Steiner, *The Institutions and Civil Government of Maryland,* pp. 11-12.
[14] *Gazetteer of the State of Maryland,* 1852, p. 29.
[15] Baker, *Lenau and Young Germany in America,* p. 49.

with the spirit of opposition to all forms of established government. They were above all things intriguers.[16] It seemed impossible for them to keep quiet in a political sense. In leaving home they merely changed their base of operations, for their agitation and opposition continued in America as it had existed in Germany. The attitude of the inhabitants of the United States toward the immigrant at first was friendly,[17] they, however, occasionally interposed a warning objection when the talk of the newcomers became too violent or patronizing.

The organization of colonization societies was characteristic of this period. Many, with different objects in view, sprang up all over Germany. Those of a decidedly political character intended to be the nucleus of a new Germany in the Mississippi Valley. It was their belief that sooner or later the United States would be Germanized. According to the plans of these societies this conquest of America would be at first intellectual, and proceeding from this, political. Then they intended to found German states in different parts of the United States, and proceeding from these as centers, it was expected that in time the whole country would be won. At first these plans were elaborated in Germany, soon, however, in the large cities of the United States similar schemes were discussed, and in some cases they were attempted.[18] This dream of a German state or group of states haunted the imagination of many educated Germans for a generation, in fact a very large proportion of the educated Germans coming to this country during the period before 1848, came distinctly with such objects in view.[19] The number of these fanatics, though not very large, caused great evil to the entire German element, through their foolish agitation.[20]

In 1848, a new cause of immigration arose, and a second great wave of German immigration advanced. Its impetus, too, was found in political conditions in Germany, but these later immi-

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

[17] *Niles' Register*, September 1832; February 1833, VII, Fourth Series, p. 40.

[18] Baker, *Lenau and Young Germany in America*, p. 61.

[19] Bruncken, *German Political Refugees in the United States from 1815 to 1860*, pp. 16 ff.

[20] Schuricht, "History of the German Element in Virginia," *13th and 14th An. Rep. of the Soc. for the Hist. of the Germans in Md.*, p. 33.

grants carried their theories to greater excesses than those of the earlier migrations. The following remarks are pertinent:

> The popular revolutions in Europe in 1848 were all anti-Catholic in their origin. Offspring of the great French Revolution, they sought to destroy Catholicity in all its works, to sap it in the hearts of the people, to hurl its protectors from the thrones and the high places. Coupling the sacred cause of freedom with that of hostility to the Church, the revolution of 1848 failed, as it deserved to fail; for modern Europe owes all to the Church, to the Papacy, and the scheme of social or political reform that seeks to rise upon the ruin of either, is one that must result in barbarism. The triumph of the existing government in Europe drove among us a horde of enemies of Catholicity, who, noisy, turbulent, vindictive, soon found in the ancient bigotry of the masses a ready audience for their no popery declamations. To that bigotry they gave the idea of the secret societies of Europe, and Know-Nothingism arose to sweep over the land, carrying elections in state after state, and even bringing a Presidential candidate into the field, presenting the strange spectacle of a party claiming to be exclusively American just eighty years after the Declaration of Independence. . . .[21]

After 1848, these political exiles came to the United States in ever-increasing numbers. It was not to be expected that men who had allowed their political convictions to sway the whole course of their lives in Germany would remain indifferent to politics in this country. But their contact with American political life disillusioned them. The politics of these Germans had been theoretical and idealistic rather than practical and realistic. It was only after their arrival that they discovered that the politician in his daily work has to deal with the passions, the prejudices and the interests of men infinitely more than with ideals. They ascribed this fact, not to human nature, but to the particular depravity of the American people. Nor could they realize that they had not made the same discovery at home simply because there they had never had an opportunity to engage in real politics, but had merely philosophized about them until the year of the revolution, and then amidst such

[21] "The Catholic Element in the History of the United States," *The Metropolitan*, V, pp. 528-529 (October, 1857).

an outburst of excited enthusiasm that the every-day aspect of politics remained hidden from their eyes.[22]

When the *Congress of German Revolutionists* met in September 1852, at Wheeling, to trace out a program for the foundation of a *Universal Republic,* and to adopt a platform calculated to make the world over, it was plainly evident that the American idea of a democratic republic was very different from that of the German Radicals.[23] Nor were the extravagant radical platforms adopted by the Free German Societies of Louisville, Richmond, and other places an inferior evidence that American institutions were menaced if not in positive danger.[24]

The radical ideas of the Germans found expression in a flood of books, pamphlets and articles published on both sides of the Atlantic, and this is just where the troubles of the Germans in the United States began.

German newspapers in the United States were not a new thing. They had flourished in colonial times, especially in Pennsylvania, but all were entirely out of touch with the German life of the time, either of the old country or that of the newly immigrated element. However, a change was brought about largely through the influence of the political refugees and their allies.[25]

The German political exiles of the thirties were brimful of enthusiastic ideas for which they sought an outlet in journalism. The better class of newspapers was almost without exception written and edited by political exiles or their partisans. In this way, men who contributed to these journals were drawn into the public affairs of their new homes, and gradually many of them became political leaders of their countrymen. During the years following the revolution of 1848, German periodicals of all kinds multiplied with astonishing rapidity, and the "Forty-eighter" element held the editorial chairs in the great majority of enterprises. In 1851, it was estimated that the number of German periodicals in the United

[22] Bruncken, *German Political Refugees,* p. 37.

[23] Schuricht, "History of the German Element in Virginia," *13th and 14th An. Rep. of the Soc. for the Hist. of the Germans in Md.,* p. 33.

[24] Hennighausen, "Reminiscences of the Political Life of the German-Americans in Baltimore during 1850-1860," *7th An. Rep. of the Soc. for the Hist. of the Germans in Md.,* Part I, p. 59.

[25] Bruncken, *German Political Refugees,* p. 21.

States was one hundred and fifty.[26] German atheists controlled about one-half of these publications.[27]

Maryland, as has been seen, had from early colonial times a large German population. In the eighteenth century, the Germans of Maryland were grouped mainly about two centers, Western Maryland and Baltimore.[28] Each successive German immigration brought a goodly number of immigrants to Baltimore. Many of the leading political exiles of 1848 found a home in that city, where they soon gave direction to the political thoughts and feelings of many of the German citizens, and more so to the larger incoming immigration, which was, to some extent, accustomed to look upon them as leaders. They were, indeed, all zealous republicans of the more ideal character who had suffered for their political views in the old world, and now would not change or bring them into accord with the existing economic condition of Maryland, a slave state.[29]

In Maryland, from the second half of the eighteenth century down to about 1830 there was a persistent struggle between the planters of the coast, who controlled the wealth of the region, and the free farmers of the interior. The Tidewater counties retained the political power which they already possessed before this stream of settlement flowed into the back-country. Refusing to reäpportion on the basis of numbers, they protected their slaves and their wealth against the dangers of a democracy interested in internal improvements and capable of imposing a tax upon slave property in order to promote their own ends. It was thus that Maryland learned how to safeguard a minority.[30]

Maryland had always been a conservative state in which the Whigs had been strong. Before the slavery question became a disturbing factor, the Whigs may be described as the party of those who felt that there was such a thing as an American nation whose individuality and characteristics were distinct from those of every other nation. The Whig instinctively disliked anything which

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

[27] "German Emigration to America," *The North American Review*, LXXXII, p. 267 (January, 1856).

[28] Faust, *The German Element in the United States*, I, p. 176.

[29] Hennighausen, "Reminiscences," Part I, p. 55.

[30] Turner, *Rise of the New West* (*Am. Nation*, XIV, p. 51).

might tend to efface this individuality and therefore he looked askance at immigrants with customs, language and institutions differing so entirely from his own. The ecomonic principles of the Whigs were, on the whole, favorable to the wealthier classes, and to this party were attracted those interested in resisting tendencies toward equality, and also the believers in a strong central government. The Whigs were also interested in promoting measures to uphold New England social customs, the Puritan Sabbath, temperance legislation, Protestant instruction in the public schools. Their opponents called them aristocrats, and, indeed, there was just enough truth in this charge to make it politically dangerous.

The Democratic party, on the other hand, was dominated more by the Jeffersonian doctrine of liberty and equality, although it did not lack a consciousness of national individuality. To the Democratic standard flocked the masses who conceived democracy to represent the common people as against the wealthy. This element sympathized with the foreigners, because the latter were, like themselves, poor, and had the same economic interests; in fact, the Democratic party welcomed the foreigner and facilitated his progress.

Under such circumstances it was not at all surprising that not only the Germans, but also the Irish and other foreigners allied themselves with the Democratic party, for it was among the Democrats that they found a willingness to allow them to participate in the political rights and privileges of the native citizen. Moreover, the educated among the foreigners, and particularly the German "Forty-eighters," found that the doctrines of Jefferson were, on the whole, identical with those for which they had fought in their native land and for which they had been driven into exile. However, when the slavery question became uppermost, it was this latter class, the political exiles and their sympathizers, who felt themselves in an uncomfortable predicament. They were Democrats because in that party they had found the bulwark of liberty and equality, and now they saw that same party the main support of the property rights of the slaveholders.

These German leaders were all abolitionists to the core. They hated slavery and immediately began to attack it by voice and pen. It was their good fortune that their attacks were made in the German language and their agitation among German-Americans, who

held no slaves, but who were, generally speaking, content with the existing order of things and had quietly adopted the political opinions of their American fellow citizens, and according to inclination had fallen into the ranks of the existing Whig or Democratic parties. If their writing or speaking had been understood by the English-speaking community in the then existing temper on the slavery question, their stay in Maryland would have been of short duration.[31]

There were at that time three German newspapers published in Baltimore, which, in their position on the slavery question, might well be styled abolitionist. They were the only anti-slavery papers published in Maryland, as the German Turners were the only anti-slavery society in the state.

The leading German newspaper was the *Wecker,* a daily, that later vigorously supported Lincoln. The second abolition paper in Baltimore was *Die Fackel.* It was a so-called periodical, published monthly, and devoted solely to propagating the peculiar views of its publisher, which were radically extreme on almost every subject. He made violent attacks on the Church and on most existing conditions of social life. The third abolition paper, *The Turn-Zeitung,* was outspoken against slavery as well as against the Church.[32] These newspaper maintained that all churchmen were simply members of a gigantic conspiracy to keep the masses in mental bondage as the best means of upholding political oppression. Their fanaticism condemned all churches alike nor could they see much difference in principle between Catholicism and Protestantism, yet it may be said that they hated the Catholic Church a little more because they considered it stronger and more dangerous.[33]

It must be noted that the bitter enmity of the majority of the political immigrants, at least of those coming after 1848, to every kind of ecclesiastical organization was one of the principal factors in perpetuating the division of the German population of the United States into three distinct camps approximately of equal strength, namely, those of the Catholic, the Lutheran, and the Liberals.

[31] Hennighausen, "Reminiscences," Part I, p. 55.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

[33] Bruncken, *German Political Refugees,* p. 40.

While the "Forty-eighters" and their adherents were engaged in combating the Roman Catholic hierarchy, they paid but little attention to the Lutheran clergy, although Lutheran orthodoxy was quite as distasteful to the Radicals as was Roman Catholicism. But for the Lutherans it was the day of small things, especially in the West, and they probably seemed of little importance to the Radicals.[34]

It was the English-speaking Protestant churches that aroused the ire of these Radicals especially, because they were the principal upholders of Sunday and prohibition legislation, and against both these features of Puritanism the Radicals took a determined stand. They shared with the masses of their countrymen an aversion to laws that interfered with their social customs. But the Germans overshot the mark when they attempted to found a party having for its object the abolition of Puritanism and slavery.[35]

To the average American mind, the open defiance of the customs of the land with regard to Sunday observance; the open indulgence in beer and in wine, in the presence of women and children, who to some extent took part in these pleasures, and above all this the open avowal of atheism and infidelity was nothing less than an evidence of total depravity. Thus was the welcome which the victims of monarchical oppression had found at first turned into strong aversion, and on the part of many into a fierce enmity.

In more respectable quarters than those of the Know-Nothings the doings of the Radicals aroused alarm also. How the conservative element of native Americans was impressed may be illustrated by the following quotation:

> The free-thinker of Tübingen is here an editor, who regards none of the courtesies of our life, nor any of our most hallowed customs and beliefs. This is no exaggeration. Many a German is amazed and grieved at the great moral contrast between multitudes of immigrants and the quiet citizens of his ancient home.[36]

A German Protestant Missionary, of New York, in speaking of the Radicals, said:

[34] Bruncken, *German Political Refugees*, p. 41.

[35] Baker, *Lenau and Young Germany in America*, p. 44.

[36] "German Emigration to America," *The North American Review*, LXXXII, p. 265 (January, 1856).

Infidelity and Sabbath profanation are raging among my countrymen like cholera in the Orient . . . there are now, I think, eight German newspapers edited in New York, and, their general bearing is anti-Christian. More destructive, perhaps, are their lodges. They are numerous, and have ostensibly for their object the support of the sick, but indirectly they destroy all Christian sentiments, and bring from the deep bottom of a skilful heart to the surface, Rationalism and Atheism. The lodge is the great speculation field of bad spirits.[37]

The editor of the Baltimore *Catholic Mirror* expressed the sentiments of many in an editorial which in part is as follows:

There are other foreigners among us conducting newspapers, and otherwise controlling public sentiment, who are using every effort to overturn our laws and to break down all the salutary restraints of religion and of every conservative principle which makes a nation great and happy. We speak of the German infidel editors who are fomenting their destructive principles in every large city of the Union . . . the masses of German infidels who are nestling among us, are encouraged by their editors to break the laws of our country, whose salutary restraints they are taught to consider "social tyranny." The laws of God are with them, of course, a mere dead letter.

If our liberties are endangered by foreigners we wish honest and sensible Americans to know who these foreigners may be, and not to be deluded by the cant of sectarians, or the lies of infidels into the belief that the dangerous strangers are either Irishmen or Catholics.[38]

The New York *Journal of Commerce* deplored the results of the Protestant German immigration in these words:

It is most earnestly to be deplored that so few who are born in this land and love American traditions, are aware of the rabid hatred of Christianity and its concomitants which inspires the vast numbers who are yearly increasing our population from the continent of Europe. We do not speak of the convicts and paupers that are smuggled into our ports from Genoa, Hamburg and Trieste; but of the tens of thousands of Germans who from year to year, come from provinces of Europe completely pantheized; and with whom freedom is considered synonymous with the downfall of the Redeemer. We called attention

[37] *The Catholic Mirror*, January 12, 1856.

[38] *The Catholic Mirror*, October 22, 1853.

some months ago to the fact that large numbers of Germans who have come of late years, to this country, are disciples of the anarchist school of Heine, . . . We showed that elections had been made to turn upon the single point, whether prayers should be offered in our Legislatures; whether the Lord's day should be kept, and religious oaths be maintained. One of the most influential German papers in this city, published simultaneously, articles warning the better class of Germans, of whom there are so many in our city, against encouraging these excesses. . . . The German language constitutes a barrier which prevents the most of our people from imagining what takes place behind the screen of that unknown tongue. The Teutonic dialect ensures the existence of the anti-Christian legions, whose large numbers are reinforced continually from abroad, as a vast secret society to which none can have access who do not go through an arduous and painstaking apprenticeship of study, which in the end leaves them when initiated, only among the first class of novices. Yet its members are easily naturalized, become as speedily as possible citizens of these States; carrying Atheism to the polls, and receiving the homage of demagogue politicians to obtain a few miserable suffrages.

A few of the reforms demanded by the "Freimänner," so they call themselves, who have set up Thomas Paine as their apostle, and who strive to gain strength to revolutionize our free government by the establishment of the tyranny of anarchy, are—abolition of the laws for the observance of the Sabbath; abolition of oaths in Congress; abolition of oaths upon the Bible; no more prayers in our Legislature; abolition of the Christian systems of punishment, abolition of the Presidency, of all Senates, of all lawsuits, involving expense; the right of the people to change the constitution when they like; a reduced term in acquiring citizenship. These things are not sought after as mere shadows. . . . They are seriously inculcated principles, earnestly instilled; for the propagation of which there exists several chief and many minor societies, to which hundreds of thousands of foreigners are affiliated, who are in constant communication with each other, and act in concert, and who are beginning to be felt in every corner of the land, but particularly in the west, where their efforts are greatly aided by the growing licentiousness of abolitionism.[39]

For a long time thoughtful men had dreaded the anarchy menaced by the impious audacity of a part of these Germans. Their

[39] *Catholic Mirorr*, June 23, 1855.

hundred newspapers were almost unanimous in socialistic and atheistic tendencies. The political immigration of those years together with Kossuth's travels had organized these Germans into a fearful league against Catholicity,[40] a most striking example of which was the treatment meted out to Monsignor Bedini, Nuncio of the Holy See, who visited the United States in 1853-1854.

Their poisoned press was used to excite its readers against the papal representative. Their organ in Cincinnati imperiously clamored to know

> . . . if there was no ball or dagger there that could reach the Nuncio's heart! It must be done by yourselves, it said, as the Yankees have no principles, no honor, no respect for anything but money; and the Irish are too deep in ignorance, you, (German Freemen) must strike the blow yourselves.[41]

The month of January, 1854, found groups of Germans in most of the cities of the United States having the satisfaction of burning a mitred figure amidst the most impious shouts. In Baltimore, on the night of January 16, 1854,[42] the effigy of the Nuncio was burned, and the house of the Archbishop, the Seminary, the Orphan Asylum, and the Convent of the Visitation were saluted with firing of pistols and fiendish yells.[43] The Nuncio was obliged to conceal his presence there,[44] and on January 17 he wrote from Washington:

> This morning, I received a most touching letter from the most distinguished Catholics of Baltimore. These gentlemen inform me that they will come to Washington to-morrow with their families, in order to show to the representatives of the Holy See their respects and protestations against the late demonstrations.[45]

The Protestant Americans of Baltimore seemed to be apprehensive lest they should be identified with the anti-Bedini demon-

[40] *Catholic Mirror*, April 19, 1856. (Translated from the French for *The Pilot.*)

[41] *Catholic Mirror*, February 11, 1854.

[42] *Clipper*, January 17, 1854; *Sun*, January 18, 1854.

[43] *Catholic Mirror*, January 21, 1854.

[44] Desmond, *The Know-Nothing Party*, p. 73.

[45] *Catholic Mirror*, April 19, 1856.

strations.[46] That these unpleasant manifestations were not sponsored by the body of American people but were confined to a foreign radical group and Know-Nothing followers is indicated by the following declaration: "We must, however, repeat our declaration that these manifestations were confined to the circle of German infidels, and to the close the Americans were spectators, taking no part." [47]

Even as early as the middle of the fourth decade, the conflicts between the German element and the nativistic agitation had become somewhat vigorous. It is difficult to say whether this movement was a result of the new political importance of the Germans, or whether conversely, the efforts of the political refugees to arouse a greater interest in public affairs among their countrymen were facilitated by native aggressions.[48] Probably both causes existed.

Again in the fifties, complaints were made against the Germans of Baltimore.[49] It seems that in 1853, previously to the meeting of the primary assemblies to nominate candidates for Congress, the German Citizens' Convention met and addressed to each of the gentlemen whose names had been mentioned as candidates, a letter, of which the following is a copy:

Baltimore, June 22d, 1853.

Dear Sir:—At the third meeting of the German Citizens' Convention, being organized to advise the German voting community of Baltimore how to cast their votes at the next elections, it was unanimously resolved to authorize the executive committee to inquire of every gentleman having submitted the use of his name as a candidate for Congress subject to a Democratic Nomination—

1st, If he is convinced of the justice and necessity of our organization.

2nd, If he openly pledges himself to represent us in Congress according to the laws of Equality and Justice, without any preference to native born American citizens. A written reply is requested.

By order of the President.

J. B. Wentz,
Sec'y.[50]

[46] *Presbyterial Critic*, p. 140 (March, 1855).

[47] *The Pilot* (Translated from the French and printed in *The Catholic Mirror*, April 19, 1856).

[48] Bruncken, *German Political Refugees*, p. 24.

[49] *The Star* (Easton, Md.), September 6, 1853.

[50] *Sun*, July 4, 1853.

All of the answers were favorable but one. Mr. Preston thought that the effect of the organization would be to separate the Germans from the great mass of the American people, and he was utterly opposed to it as he did not see the justice or necessity of an organization which Germanized rather than Americanized, and which from its very character sought to perpetuate a foreign feature and would place the German within a prescribed segment, when by the terms of the Constitution he would be entitled to the enjoyment of the whole. Neither could Mr. Preston perceive how a Representative in Congress could draw a distinction between native-born and naturalized citizens without violating the Constitution which he had sworn to support.[51]

In July, 1853, these same Germans, through the press, declared that they had always fulfilled their duties as American citizens, but had never obtained that political and social position which they considered their due. With a determination to remedy what they considered an evil, they demanded that in those parts of the city with a large German population there should be Justices of the Peace, city councilmen, and public school teachers who understood the German language, and at the Courts in Baltimore City and in Frederick, Washington, Allegany and Baltimore counties salaried state translators whose talent and integrity would be a guarantee that they would be able to accomplish their duties. Out of the eleven delegates in the state legislature, the Germans wanted two who could speak the German language, and whose reputation and talent should give them surety that they were qualified.[52]

The nativist organ in Baltimore reminded the Germans that the whole movement was improper and injudicious, because it would divide the citizens into clans having distinct interests in view. Indeed, the *Clipper* could not recognize the right of any class of citizens to demand a certain portion of the public offices, and was fearful that the German associations would lead to similar organizations making like demands.[53]

Mr. Schmeckebier has called this action of the Germans an interference in local politics "through organizations of their own," [54]

[51] *Ibid.*

[52] *Clipper*, July 15, 1853.

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] Schmeckebier, *History of the Know Nothing Party in Maryland*, p. 51.

and says that if foreigners had kept out of politics, all the talk about foreign domination would have fallen flat.[55]

Doubtless that would have happened. But who will say that the Germans should have generously foregone a constitutional privilege, or that they should have quietly submitted to "taxation without representation," when the very forefathers of this country had used the most dangerous expedient of rebellion to resist just such a principle.

Nativist hostility was not, of course, directed against the political exiles in particular, but against all manifestations of German national spirit which seemed to be adverse to the claims of American national sentiment, so the masses of Germans were most directly touched, not by the political restrictions which the nativists desired to place upon them, but by attacks on their social customs.[56]

It must be said, however, that the position of the Germans in the slave states, and particularly in the border states, was a peculiar one. In Maryland, especially in the city of Baltimore, there was a considerable German element. Nowhere was the fact more evident than here that the Germans of all classes had no sympathy with slavery. A German slaveholder was a rare exception. Among the immigrated Germans there were many political refugees and these were conspicuous in their fearless opposition to slavery, and their abolition views were usually not at all concealed, notwithstanding the danger which attended all expression of such sentiments in a slave state.

During the decade before the Civil War, Baltimore attained to an unenviable notoriety through violent outbursts of Know-Nothing hatred. This must be ascribed, in no small measure, to the fear with which these bold German abolitionists inspired the pro-slavery population.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

[56] Bruncken, *German Political Refugees*, p. 41.

CHAPTER V

The Dominant Factor in Maryland Politics—1854

In his speech on *Americanism* in the House of Representatives on January 4, 1855, Mr. Sollers, a congressman of Maryland, seemed almost to insist that Maryland had much to do with the beginnings of Know-Nothingism. It is well to read his exact words:

But it is said that "Know-Nothingism first made its appearance in this House in the person of a gentleman from Massachusetts, (Mr. Banks,) an abolition State." I apprehend that the gentleman who makes the charge is laboring under a slight mistake in this. It was, sir, the humble individual who now addresses you, that, at the last session, first introduced a proposition to exclude all foreigners from our Army and Navy. I can almost complain of my friend from Massachusetts, in the language of the Latin poet: "*Hos ego versiculos feci, tulit alter honores*"; which being literally construed, means, he has "*stolen my thunder.*" But, be this as it may, if Know-Nothingism did come from Massachusetts, (and I do not know that it did,) in my judgment, it came from a very good starting-point.[1]

About a month later, in the very same House, Mr. Smith, of Tennessee, concluded his speech on the Naturalization Laws and Know-Nothingism with the following remarks:

And I can tell the gentleman from Maryland that if that proud Commonwealth which he has the honor in part to represent, and whose Catholic founders were among the first to establish religious toleration in the American Colonies, is to bear the responsibilities and answer for the consequences of this secret political order, instead of becoming the Marathon of the Union, she will become the modern *Nineveh*, to bring down upon the nation the curses of the gods as a punishment for its iniquity. To avert such fatal consequences, I look to the united efforts of the *Democratic party.*[2]

[1] *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 2 Sess., App., p. 85.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

In a revelation made by *One of the Expelled,* in a book entitled *A Complete Exposure of the Order of Know-Nothings,* the author asserts that the order or league called "Know-Nothing" was organized in the city of Baltimore in the course of the winter of 1851 by eleven persons, seven of whom were residents of that city, three of New York, and one of New Orleans. How, or under what circumstances they came together, he said that he could never ascertain, although he was in Baltimore at the time and was initiated into one of the first lodges founded there.[3]

The Baltimore *Clipper* of August 14, 1855, asked the following questions:

> What candidate for Congress was that we had in 1853, who was frightened from the field by the Catholic conspiracy for defeating him because he "had so long been a friend of our public schools," and what politician was that now on the Pierce delegate ticket, who delivered such an anti-Catholic speech before the Eastern Female High School as to draw from the *Catholic Mirror* a decent castigation? Who did these things, we ask, and thus sowed the seeds of Know-Nothingism broadcast in this community long before a Know-Nothing lodge was organized in any part of the country? The *Catholic Mirror* can tell if it will.[4]

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[3] *A Complete Exposure of the Order of the "Know Nothings,"* by One of the Expelled, p. 6.

[4] *Clipper,* August 14, 1855.

The *Catholic Mirror* of October 29, 1853, denied the report that Catholics, as a body, had arrayed themselves against Mr. Vansant, and declared that many of Mr. Vansant's personal and political friends were those prominently connected with the question of Free Education. "The Friends of free education," said the *Mirror,* "have higher aims than those of mere politicians, and in pressing their claims they will never resort to means unworthy of good citizens." *Clipper,* November 3, 1853.

In the *Catholic Mirror* of November 5, 1853, Hon. R. M. McLane defended himself from the charge of having expressed himself inimical to the "Free Education" schools of the Roman Catholics, and says: "While I am an advocate of secular education in our existing 'public schools,' I am by no means indifferent to a further diffusion of learning by means of schools sustained by those who prefer to combine religion with secular instruction, and in support of which latter schools, I invoked the aid of individuals and the State." *Clipper,* November 8, 1853.

However, in a letter written December 19, 1855, and published in Washington, D. C., under the title, *Know Nothingism Unveiled,* the following statements are found:

It was in the land of these law-despising, right-abusing persecutors, that Know-Nothingism originated, Senator Adams's information to the contrary notwithstanding. . . . Chase says it originated in the "free States." The first Know-Nothing formulary of the grand council was issued from the press of Damrell and Moore, No. 16, Devonshire street, Boston. Baltimore would not have sent its bantling to receive its swaddling bands in Boston. The infamous Judson (according to the papers) was recently introduced to a council in Pennsylvania as the father of the order and he was received with plaudits. The thing has no Southern feature.[5]

Several other dates have been given by good authorities as the time when the Know-Nothings were formally organized in Maryland.[6] Be that as it may, as early as July 10, 1852, the organ of nativism in Baltimore was found strongly advocating the formation of such a party. At this time, the *Clipper* noted that in view of the probable dissolution of the two old parties an effort was being made to create a new political association to be called the American party. But it was thought that it would be premature and useless to form such an association with the view of having an influence on the presidential election of 1852. This newspaper advocated the policy of letting the two existing parties fight their last political battle, then the friends of the Union and Constitution might take their stand as an American party, embracing all who were resolved to perpetuate the union of the states and to preserve the policy which had conducted to prosperity and greatness.

[5] *Know Nothingism Unveiled* (Letter of Judge Augustus B. Longstreet, of Mississippi, addressed to Rev. William Winans in reply to a communication published by him in the *Natchez* (Mississippi) *Courier,* and addressed to Judge Longstreet, on the subject of Know Nothingism, 1855).

[6] Carroll in *The Great American Battle,* p. 270, gives May, 1852, as the date of the institution of Know-Nothingism in Baltimore. The recording secretary of the National Council states that the first meeting of the Know-Nothings in Baltimore was held in the fall of 1852 (Schmeckebier, p. 13). Whitney in *A Defence of the American Policy,* p. 284, gives May, 1853, as the date. Steiner, in the *Life of Henry Winter Davis,* says that Davis' *Speech of May 9, 1864,* states that the Know-Nothings were organized in Baltimore in the summer of 1854.

Besides, it was said that the country was threatened with another party equally hostile to both Whigs and Democrats—a party in favor of dissolving the Union—a party in which the unprincipled abolitionists of the North and the fiery secessionists of the South differing on every other point, had come together for this daring and dangerous purpose. The combined exertions of the members of the two old parties were said to be the only means of meeting this new combination and putting it down. The abolitionists were supposed to hold the balance of power between the two parties, and their votes and influence might be given to either "upon a consideration." The platform of both parties excluded the agitation of the slavery question and pledged the respective candidates and parties to maintain the Union at all hazards. The *Clipper* was anticipating that the malcontents at North and South might be prepared for a more decisive movement in four years to come, and, therefore, this nativist organ believed that all patriots of the country should combine to suppress any action having in view the destruction of the republic.[7]

Maryland was an old slaveholding state and a border state. The program drawn up by the American party for her parallel of latitude suited her perfectly. To keep the slavery question in the background was the Maryland policy, so she rapidly took the position that naturalization, immigration and papal aggression were the important and vital issues, for she looked upon it as a great gain that the raising of new questions operated against the endeavor to oppose a solid North to a solid South, in respect to the slavery question.

Long before this, Maryland had adopted the policy of gradually emancipating her slaves. Charles Carroll of Carrollton had introduced into the Senate of Maryland a bill for the gradual abolition of slavery, which, although it failed to pass, showed the policy of a sagacious statesman in regard to that momentous question even at that early date.[8] From 1820 to 1830 there were movements in Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky and Maryland for the gradual emancipation of their slaves. In Virginia, the movement had nearly suc-

[7] *Clipper*, July 10, 1852.

[8] Phelps, "Oration at the 150th Anniversary of the Founding of Baltimore," p. 44. (*Rec. of the Am. Cath. Hist. Soc.*, 1909, p. 255).

ceeded, when the aggression of the northern abolitionists arrested it in all of these states.[9]

The South feared the industrial revolution that would follow upon emancipating the slaves at a stroke. The North seemed to have forgotten what had been so admirably expressed regarding slavery in the South:

> Slavery was a heritage handed down to the South from a time *when the moral consciousness of mankind regarded it as a right,*—a time when even the pious sons of New England were slave-owners and deterred by no conscientious scruple from plying the *slave-trade* with proverbial Yankee enterprise. It became a peculiarly Southern institution, not because the rights of others were dearer to the northern than to the southern heart, but because the condition of soil and climate made negro-labor *unprofitable in the northern States and led the northern slave-owner to sell his slaves down South.*[10]

It was all very well for the abolitionists to aim at carrying out the noble design of emancipating the slaves, but conservative Maryland could see that these fanatics were ignoring the constitutional rights, the interests, and the safety of the white population of the South, and, furthermore, she knew that in accomplishing their design these abolitionists would sacrifice the cultured portion of the southern people to the terrorism of an uneducated and inferior race. That the North, after having sold its slaves to the South, would attempt to compel southern slaveholders to free their negroes without compensation was the great injustice that seemed imminent, and exasperated the slave states.

Mr. Sollers spoke from the point of view of a Maryland Know-Nothing in his address of January 4, 1855, in the House of Representatives.[11] He believed that nearly every question which originally divided the two old parties had been swept away and that, although the Democratic party claimed to be national in its views on the subject of slavery and styled itself the "natural ally" of the South, he thought that the recent elections had demonstrated

[9] Schuricht, "History of the German Element in Virginia," in *13th and 14th An. Rep. of the Soc. for the Hist. of Germans in Md.*, p. 67.

[10] Cave, "The Memorial Oration," in Richmond *Weekly Times*, May 31, 1894.

[11] *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 2 Sess., App., pp.. 82 ff.

that neither the Democratic party nor the Whig party could claim to be national upon the great and momentous question and he had concluded that the country was fast hastening to a *purely sectional contest.* This representative of the largest slaveholding interest in Maryland did not deem it his duty to compare his state with any other, or to defend the institution of slavery, for he said:

> It is where the framers of the Constitution placed it. . . . If you ask me by what right I hold my slaves, I point you to the Constitution. If you ask me by what arguments I will defend my right to them, I will answer, as the Scotch earl did his terrified monarch, by showing him his naked sword.

However, he declared that he anticipated no contest with swords, for a party had sprung into existence that possessed all the strength of Hercules to crush all parties and factions hostile to the integrity of the Union; a party which knew no North, no South, no East, no West. Mr. Sollers denied that this new party sought to destroy states' rights, and maintained that it was with one hand, to uphold the right of the states, and with the other, the integrity of the Union. Of Maryland, he said: "She, in good or evil report, will stand by the Union as it is and the Constitution as it is." Then he added: "And this, sir, is what the American party means to do. It intends to let slavery remain where the Constitution placed it, recognizing neither the doctrine of pro-slavery on the one hand, nor abolition on the other."

The *intense nationality* which Mr. Sollers claimed to be the very life blood of the party and from which sprung a disposition not to permit others to share equally all the privileges which the natives of a country enjoy, was said to be another principle of the American party most important in maintaining the Union. But it was a nationality that said to foreigners in advance that the Natives were determined that "Americans shall rule America." To the objection that up to that period foreigners had been permitted to come to this country and political privileges allowed them, Mr. Sollers answered that immigration had so increased in the last ten years that there was a most serious apprehension that foreigners would become the ruling power in the United States by usurping the whole power and authority of the Government, and, moreover, it was claimed to be an alarming fact that there was an immense

influx of convicts and paupers being sent over to the United States by foreign governments.

The Maryland Representative in answering the charge that the American party waged war against Roman Catholics, declared that it waged no war against any religion but against the union of Church and State, against the mingling of religion with politics, against the principle that a man may exercise all the rights of an American citizen and at the same time owe allegiance to a foreign prince or potentate, but not against any man merely for his religious opinions.

Some believed that the whole question partook of the nature of the organization of labor, but Mr. Sollers thought that if the American party meant anything, it meant that Americans did not wish foreign labor to come into competition with theirs, and he saw no great harm in this.

The final charge, that the Native American movement had its origin in and was connected with abolitionism, was disconcerting. On this subject, Mr. Sollers said:

> If this is so, the abolitionists are a much less sagacious and far-seeing people than I supposed they were. By whom, I beg to know, are your new States, for the most part, peopled? We know that the moment foreigners arrive here, if they have the means, (and many of them have,) they seek the fertile regions of the far West, where lands are cheap, and the soil is virgin; and, almost to a man, they are opposed to negro slavery, because it comes in direct competition with their own labor. And, sir, it is known that the subject of abolition was ignored in all the recent elections at the North.

This indeed was the bait by which Maryland was drawn into the Know-Nothing Party.

But did not Mr. Sollers know that Maryland was opposed to immigration, not because foreigners settled in Maryland (except in Baltimore), but because the foreigner was opposed to slavery, and in settling the new free states of the Northwest swelled the Congressional representation of the northern states, thereby jeopardizing the very institution which Maryland was bent on protecting. And did he not understand that this very thing that made European

immigration a thorn in the flesh of the South could but determine the North to stimulate it as much as possible?[12]

The potent influence wielded by the Know-Nothings in the northern elections of 1854, the prostration of the Democratic party in the North, the complete disorganization and disruption of the Whig party, the more than seventy-five members of the Know-Nothing party elected to Congress from the northern states, all gave the new party much prestige and promised a victory in the presidential election of 1856.

Maryland became enthusiastic. Up to that time the influences within the Know-Nothing party had been strongly anti-slavery. However, after the election of 1854 the southern politicians and some at the North who were without anti-slavery convictions, and who had failed to comprehend the full significance of the uprising of the people at this time, sought to "nationalize" the party, which simply meant the placing it in an attitude of hostility to freedom or in a neutral position on the slavery question.[13]

This change, together with the enormous increase in membership because of the adoption of the Union degree, another pro-slavery device, convinced Maryland that she would do well to cast in her lot with the new secret political order.

In the Maryland state elections of 1853, the Nativists obtained what they desired, namely, the balance of power in the state legislature.[14]

Then the development of the power of the Know-Nothings began to be felt in Western Maryland. As early as the spring of 1854 Hagerstown elected an anti-Maine Law candidate for mayor, and Know-Nothing candidates for the city council.[15] A few weeks after that, Cumberland, acting upon the formally adopted policy of the Know-Nothings of the time,[16] selected a ticket from those nominated by the two old parties and elected every man on it.[17]

The Democrats, in their city convention of July 20, 1854,

[12] Von Holst, *Constitutional and Political History of the United States*, V, p. 114.

[13] Wilson, *Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America*, II, p. 420.

[14] *Sun*, November 5, 1853.

[15] *Sun*, April 12, 1854.

[16] Desmond, *The Know-Nothing Party*, p. 62.

[17] *Sun*, May 10, 1854.

denounced the Know-Nothing order as "contrary to the principles of the Constitution," [18] however, a few weeks later their fear of the new political order was manifested in the declaration that they would carry the fall elections in spite of the combination of Whigs, Know-Nothings and Temperance men.[19] As the secret organization had recourse to the decidedly anti-Republican plan of concealing the names of the candidates for office and of discussing in secret conclave the measures which they intended to defend, the Baltimore Democrats were at a loss to know the strength and plans of the Know-Nothings. It was only on September 27, 1854, that the *Clipper* announced the name of Samuel Hinks as the Know-Nothing candidate for mayor. He had been selected the night before in secret convention composed of five delegates from each ward.[20]

In the local elections, held on October 11, 1854, the Know-Nothings got enough votes for their candidate for mayor, and for a majority in both branches of the city council, and thus secured control of the city.[21]

With the office of mayor there passed into the hands of the Know-Nothings the police power of the city. The marshal, subject to the authority of the mayor, had entire control of the officers and members of the police force.[22]

That they had amidst disgraceful scenes secured all this power with pistols, clubs and stones [23] was not at all disconcerting to the Know-Nothings. It had been a glorious moment for those who would fan the flame of religious discord and break asunder social ties which united one family with another. The bait of religious proscription was seized with avidity by all bigots. The ministers of peace were found urging on their flocks in the war against religious rights. The *Catholic Mirror* reported that "on the day of the election, two Protestant preachers were seen at the polls holding tickets and mingling in the strife.[24] Appeals were made in the most inflammatory terms, and the commercial newspapers of the

[18] *American*, July 22, 1854.
[19] *Sun, American*, September 13, 1854.
[20] *Sun, American*, September 27, 1854.
[21] *Sun, American*, October 12, 1854.
[22] Folsom, *Our Police*, p. 25.
[23] *Sun, American*, October 12, 1854.
[24] *Catholic Mirror*, October 14, 1854.

city failed in their duty, but with all the force of pulpit, press and intolerance the Know-Nothing candidate for mayor would have been defeated but for other issues.[25] It was well known that the desire to obtain office was the leading motive and that some one sect or other would monopolize more than its share. "Already," says the *Catholic Mirror* of October 14, 1854, "is it remarked that the City Council of a certain city contains fifteen Methodists, two of whom are preachers."

This success continued through the spring of 1855, and soon Williamsport [26] and Annapolis [27] were in their hands.

Then came the crushing defeat of the Know-Nothings in the Virginia elections of May 24, 1855.[28] Under the lead of Henry A. Wise, Democracy had achieved a victory. This was the blow that compelled the secret political order to take a definite position on the slavery question.

[25] *Ibid.*
[26] *Sun*, March 9, 1855.
[27] *Sun*, April 4, 1855.
[28] Hambleton, *Political Campaign in Virginia*, p. 362.

CHAPTER VI

Political Ostracism, 1855

The National Council of the Know-Nothing Order convened in Philadelphia, June 5, 1855. Every state of the Union was represented by delegates.[1] So far as the uninitiated could learn, the chief purpose of the meeting was the construction of a platform, which, indeed, had become a political necessity. Many of the mysteries, too, had so long ceased to be mysterious, in spite of oaths and watchwords, that it seemed but prudent to make a tardy virtue of publishing what the world had already found out for itself.

The first step of the Council was to proclaim the decease of the old political parties; the next, to administer on their goods and chattels. At the very moment of repudiating the sins and responsibilities of the Whigs and Democrats this secret political order bodily took possession of everything that had helped or spoiled the fortunes of the defunct. Everything was done after the immemorial fashion on such occasions, and not only did the performances consist of the same old tricks, but the performers themselves turned out to be the old familiar jugglers. There was the usual squabble upon the slavery question, without the usual reconciliation. Up to this time the Know-Nothings had tried to convince themselves and the people that the slavery question could be silenced, provided they talked loudly and zealously enough of other things. But now the charm of the nativist call became impotent in the presence of the power which the slavery question held over the minds and hearts of the people. The representatives of the South declared that silence would no longer do, for in that section all that they would say would be in vain so long as they did not explain themselves on the slavery question.

Now, in this national representation of the Know-Nothing Order, it had been stated that the slavery question was still a living and powerfully operating factor in national politics, and that as the Know-Nothings wished to be a national party, they had to take a position on this question. Von Holst says:

[1] Scisco, *Political Nativism in New York State*, p. 144.

All the representatives of the south and a large part of those of the north had the slavery question incomparably more at heart than Know-Nothingism. They were such firm and ardent partisans on that question that they might, at most, pursue other party ends, side by side with it, but would never be able, as partisans of such other program, to proclaim as a principle, neutrality on the slavery question which they looked upon as an absurdity. Hence the very establishment of a creed on the slavery question was the disruption of the party.[2]

The position on this issue finally taken by the Know-Nothings was embodied in the 12th section of the platform. While a straddle was intended, it was more favorable to the South, as it was declared "that Congress ought not to legislate upon the subject of slavery within the territory of the United States." On the adoption of this section, the delegates of twelve states withdrew and issued an appeal to the people in which they demanded the restoration of the Missouri Compromise.[3]

The South had been victorious in the Council on the slavery question, so for the time being Maryland was at ease on that point, but now there was something else to be settled. Controversy became centered on the 8th section of the Philadelphia platform.

This section covertly taught, and was meant insidiously to inculcate, without avowing it, the absolute and unqualified exclusion of Catholic citizens, whether native or naturalized, from "all political stations—executive, legislative, judicial or diplomatic." Whatever might have been the grounds assumed or the justification set up, that was the aim. It was not, that *if* anyone—Catholic or Protestant—shall trespass against his Americanism and his allegiance, he shall pay the forfeit of political attainder; no such thing. There was no *if*, no contingency, no escape for the Catholic. The conclusions were foregone—they were laid down as political axioms.

By the 8th section, the Know-Nothing Order was pledged "to resist the aggressive policy and corrupting tendencies of the Roman Catholic Church," even though this assertion had never been accompanied by facts, substantiated by the dates and locations of

[2] Von Holst, *United States*, V, pp. 193-4.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

those "aggressive and corrupting tendencies," which indeed might have had due influence with those not initiated in the Know-Nothing party. If the march of this "aggressive policy and corrupting tendencies" had been onward, why was it at that time, that there were only two members of the Catholic Church in so large a body as the House of Representatives? Three thousand five hundred clergymen of New England had sent a memorial to Congress against the Nebraska Bill, and yet not one Roman Catholic priest had signed it.[4]

The Philadelphia Council had scarcely adjourned when the Baltimore Know-Nothings ratified its action at a mass-meeting held in Monument Square.[5] The Hon. Kenneth Rayner, an acknowledged leader of the party, was the principal speaker on that occasion. Several portions of his speech should be noted, as they seem to point out conclusively that the 8th and 11th sections of the platform adopted at the National Council were, in a large measure, the cause of the formation of the Know-Nothing party.[6]

"We have met," said Mr. Rayner, "as Americans and Protestants to avow the principles by which we will be governed, principles founded upon Right, and which would prevail in spite of the machinations of the Roman Catholic Church. . . . But the time had come when their liberty was threatened and the same spirit which impelled the sires of the Revolution to rebel against the extortions of a foreign power now prompted the people to rise up to put a check upon the priestly aggressions of the Romish Church. . . . We are fighting for the Bible and the Right of Religious Liberty."

Then in the next sentence Mr. Rayner set forth his idea of religious liberty: "If people feel so disposed they can send their daughters to the nunneries; let them do so, but we will battle against the control of such institutions when those daughters are shut out from communion with their parents." Did not Mr. Rayner show that he and his order were battling against the right of religious liberty when he publicly avowed their intention "to battle against the control of such institutions"? Such conduct would not be in

[4] *Catholic Mirror*, August 25, 1855.
[5] *Sun, American*, June 21, 1855.
[6] *Catholic Mirror*, August 25, 1855.

accordance with the letter and spirit of the Constitution which Mr. Rayner had taken an oath in the House of Representatives to support. Another statement should be noted: "No man," he said, "can be a true American and a true member of the Roman Catholic Church, for his allegiance to the priesthood is stronger than that which he bears to his country." But the speaker gave no proof for these statements, nor that the priests had used their influence in a deleterious manner, in opposition to the Constitution, or to the statutes of the several states, or in the language of the 8th section, so as to make it an "aggressive policy and corrupting tendency." Neither had he told what were the machinations of the Roman Catholic Church of which he had so loudly spoken.

In speaking of the naturalization laws, Mr. Rayner did not cite facts to justify the use of such language as the following: "What was there now to be feared to the free institutions of this country, but from the foreign population, which, like the serpent, through your kindness taken from the most abject poverty and warmed into life, repays your hospitality by stinging your vitals, by attempting to destroy your freedom." And had Mr. Rayner forgotten that it was these same foreigners who had built the railroads and canals of the country, who had paved the streets and contributed to the general welfare by giving that impetus to the advancement of the arts and sciences which labor alone can give when united to capital? Where slavery did not exist the foreign population had literally been, yea, verily the hewers of wood and drawers of water for the Know-Nothings.

The case of Shifler,[7] who was killed in the Philadelphia riots[8] by a few Irishmen, was the only fact alluded to at the ratification meeting in Baltimore against the Irish and Catholics. But that was not sufficient reason for all foreigners and Roman Catholics to be disfranchised, particularly when this very excitement was owing to the acts of the Native American party. Surely there had been Irishmen killed in their private quarrels with Americans, and had not some Americans often deliberately defrauded those foreigners out of their just dues earned by laboring hard in making public

[7] Lee, *The Origin and Progress of the American Party in Politics*, p. 55.
[8] *Public Ledger*, Philadelphia, May, 1844.

improvements, and would it be fair to judge all American citizens by the wicked acts of a few men?

Upon the question of admission of the Louisiana delegation, one of whose members was a Catholic, this same Honorable gentleman had indeed long before said everything in the Council itself, which the purposes of this investigation require. The *New York Times* records the following:

> Mr. Rayner, of North Carolina, the only prominent Southern member who took the opposite ground, insisted that *opposition to Catholicism, as inconsistent with Republican institutions, was the very cornerstone of the Know-Nothing movement; and that any proceeding which should ignore or be inconsistent with this position would be fatal to the Order.* In this he was sustained by a decided majority of the members from the Northern States.[9]

Indeed, the direct action of the Council itself, upon the very point under consideration, puts an end to the possibility of rational dispute. The following report of the proceedings tells its own story:

> PHILADELPHIA, June 14, 1855.—The Convention assembled at nine o'clock this morning, pursuant to adjournment.
>
> Mr. Alexander, of Maryland, Chairman of the Committee, made a report on the Ritual, suggesting no very material alterations except in the terms of membership, *the principal change proposed being the admission of American Catholics.* This proposed modification gave rise to a most animated discussion . . . and resulted in the defeat of the proposition by a very large majority.
>
> JUNE, 15.—*The Catholic test was again brought on the tapis, and elicited a warm debate.* Messrs. Lyons, of New York; Rayner, of North Carolina, and others spoke against its abrogation; and Messrs. Hopkins, of Alabama, and Brown of Tennessee, and others, in favor. The test was again reaffirmed by a decisive majority.[10]

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[9] *The Metroplitan*, III, p. 411 (August, 1855).

Mr. Rayner was a slaveholder, and of course it was to his advantage to talk against Catholicism loudly enough to drown the cry against slavery.—Von Holst, *United States*, V, p. 120.

[10] *The Metropolitan*, III, p. 411 (August, 1855); *Clipper*, June 16, 1855 (Quoted from the *New York Herald*, June 15, 1855).

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Thus by the express decision of the Council—twice deliberately rendered—no Catholic, native or naturalized, could be a member of the order, and no applicant for admission could successfully present himself without first abjuring Catholicity. And this, it must be observed, was established, not as a part of the platform, but as a rigid rule of the organization; not as a portion of the official advertisement for customers, but as a vital element of the ritual. It lay, therefore, at the very root of the system. In the face of this, it would be mere fatuity to believe that they did not intend to proscribe, by their votes, those whom they spurned from fellowship in their lodges.

The 8th section of the platform set the Catholics of this Republic aside as a degraded caste, incapable of allegiance to their country, and even under oath unworthy of trust. It proclaimed a disfranchisement through the ballot-box, which is not within the scope of legislation. It lay in wait, behind the freedom of suffrage, to strike, unpunished, at the liberty of conscience.

And all this was done by those who styled themselves native Americans, and in spite of the sixth article of the Constitution of the United States, the language of which is as explicit as intelligence and integrity could make it: "No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust, under the United States." Nor is the first article of the amendment to the Constitution less intelligible or decided: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Then the Declaration of Rights of the State of Maryland, in Article 33, contains the great and fundamental doctrine: "That as it is the duty of every man to worship God in such manner as he thinks most acceptable to Him, all persons are equally entitled to protection in their religious liberty." And Article 34 draws the corollary from this—

> That no other test or qualification ought to be required, on admission to any office of trust or profit, than such oath of office as may be prescribed by this constitution or by the laws of the State, and a declaration of belief in the Christian religion: and if the party shall profess to be a Jew, the declaration shall be of his belief in a future state of rewards and punishments.

Now, in Maryland there was no Catholic question, although it was a state with a goodly Catholic population. The leading Catholic families there were, for the most part, long settled in the country, or were descendants of the very first settlers—they were the real natives. Von Holst says of them:

> Not even the suspicion of Ultramontane views and efforts had ever been raised against these people, and no one claimed that they had changed their convictions in a day. What reason, then, could be given for the demand that, from this time forth, they should be excluded from all elective offices because of their religion? Here every attempt to make a bugbear of Catholicism was simply ridiculous, because people's own experience could not be obliterated by what, in the north, under entirely different circumstances, was, with or without reason, a cause of apprehension.[11]

Although numerous ratification meetings had been held throughout the state,[12] some of the Know-Nothing lodges had given up the Catholic test for admission, and it was reported that an effort would be made in the Know-Nothing state convention in Maryland to repudiate the religious reference in the Philadelphia platform.[13] Maryland, it must be remembered, had produced a Carroll and a Taney.

Just after the signal defeat of the Know-Nothings in the Virginia elections, a part of that political order, anxious for recruits, invited the foreign-born Protestant body in the United States to join the ranks. This was indeed a cunning shift for a waning power. In Baltimore, the leaders of the Know-Nothings informed native-born Catholics that not they, but only foreigners were included on the proscribed lists. This sagacious party was at the same time in New York assuring infidel immigrants that their support would be kindly received and that Catholics alone were proscribed, while among the Louisiana Catholics it proclaimed its antipathy to foreigners only.[14] The Know-Nothing organ in Baltimore declared that the line between the native and foreign Catholic

[11] Von Holst, *United States*, V, p. 115.
[12] *Sun*, June 30, July 7, 9, 11, 19, 1855.
[13] *American*, July 13, 1855.
[14] *Catholic Mirror*, June 9, 1855.

was intended to be drawn by the 8th section, for it was said to provide for the admission to all offices of all "who do not hold civil allegiance, directly or indirectly, to any foreign power, whether civil or ecclesiastical; and who are Americans by birth, education, and training." The *Clipper* went on to say that it was well known that Americans who profess the Roman Catholic religion, however they may obey the dogmas of the Church, disclaim all allegiance to the Pope in civil matters, and thus whilst foreign Roman Catholics were to be excluded from office, the American Catholic was placed upon an equality with his fellow citizen. "This discrimination," said the *Clipper,* "is just and judicious." [15]

Again, on July 20, 1855, the following article appeared in the *Clipper:* "In Maryland, Catholics and Protestants have lived in harmony until recently, and we venture to assert that harmony would have remained undisturbed had it not been for indiscreet zeal of foreign Catholics." This happy state, it said, had been disturbed by Archbishop Hughes.[16]

Already Protestants were beginning to see that the Know-Nothings were overreaching themselves in their proscriptive program. *The National Era,* a semi-religious paper, the metropolitan organ of moderate free-soilism, expressed the fear of Protestants in the following article:

> Let Protestants beware—they are in imminent danger of disgracing their own cause. It is impossible that a proscriptive, oath-bound, secret political association, comprehending infidel and christian, the pious and the profligate, rascality and respectability, bound together by the common resolve to inflict civil disabilities upon the Catholics, can long hold together; but when it shall have been broken in pieces, what a reaction may follow in favor of the very body now so fiercely proscribed! The popular mind may swing as far into the extreme of indifference, as it is into existence of bigotry. And with what arguments will the miserable experiment have filled the mouths of the advocates of Catholicism! They will illustrate your boasts of liberality, toleration and justice, and magnanimous reliance upon truth, or Protestantism, *by reminiscences of Know Nothingism!* Already the most thoughtful of the Protestant ministers are looking forward with apprehension.

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[15] *Clipper,* June 21, 1855.

[16] *Clipper,* June 20, 1855.

An eminent divine in a recent letter to us remarks: "But a word as to Romanism. I feared two things as soon as I saw it brought into a political movement—first, that in uniting the infidel opponents to Romanism with those who are evangelical, the vital truths of the gospel would be left out. The result of this would be an ultimate recoil into superstition and despotism, for infidelity can never destroy Romanism. A positive religious power filling the heart is needed to do it. I feared, also, superficial arguments and a reaction so that the final result should strengthen Romanism; and also I feared from an assault on Romanists, rather than the hierarchy another reaction."

It has been to us one of the strangest developments of Know-Nothingism that men professing, and, in many instances, ministers of the gospel, have been detected in issuing down dark staircases leading out from obscure rooms in which the secret order were wont to congregate—alternating, in their steady egress with persons of the most profligate habits, of the most abandoned lives, and of the most openly professed infidel opinions. When religious intolerance reaches such a point as this—when hatred of Catholicism brings professed ministers and representatives of the Protestant religion to consort with the representatives of every degree of sin and wickedness in secret midnight conclave, well may the *National Era* and every Protestant paper in the land exclaim BEWARE.

It must be remembered that Know-Nothingism is not, in fact, a Protestant organization—that is, it is not *controlled* by men who care a fig for the Protestant or any other church. *It is purely a political engine,* in the hands of the same politicians who moved heaven and earth to obtain the votes of Catholics and foreigners for general Scott in the last presidential election. It is anti-Catholic to enlist Protestants in the support of its candidates. It panders to the morbid anti-Catholic spirit of the country only to bring to the aid of its presidential schemes those Protestant democrats whose zeal runs away with their discretion. The old Whig party is disbanded, and Know-Nothingism succeeds it; and the new organization sets its sails for this popular breeze which is just now hatred to Catholicism and prejudice against foreigners, stimulated by violent appeals and extravagant narrations of a mendacious political press. . . .

When Protestantism shall ally itself with a political party—when it shall lend its name to build up a politico-religious organization in the country, it will be—worse than disgraced—it will be ruined. "Let Protestants beware!" [17]

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[17] *Catholic Mirror,* September 1, 1855.

Resolutions passed in June, 1855, by the Whigs and Democrats of St. Mary's county conclusively prove that the descendants of the real natives of Maryland were unanimous in their opposition to the Know-Nothings, and that they were not disagreeing on the question of religion. At the Whig meeting a committee presented a series of resolutions expressive of the sense of the meeting from which is extracted the following:

Resolved, That it would be a libel on the intelligence, the patriotism and the honesty of the American people to suppose that a party organised under the sanction of an unholy oath to keep secret its purposes and actions, and based upon the principle of exclusion of any citizen from office on the ground of a particular variety of Christian faith can be of any other than mere temporary existence involving essentially the elements of its own dissolution, and that we, the Whigs of St. Mary's, can have no sympathy or hold any affiliation with any such party in any manner whatever.

Resolved, That we, the Whigs of St. Mary's, will ever keep brightly burning, and guard with vestal vigilance the lamp of universal religious toleration and christian fellowship, that more than two hundred years ago was first lighted up within our own limits by our "Pilgrim Fathers," and that we denounce as a traitor to civil duty and social harmony the man who with sacrilegious breath would seek to dim one ray of its glorious brightness.

At the Democratic meeting in St. Mary's, the committee reported a preamble and series of resolutions which were also unanimously adopted. A portion of these resolutions is subjoined:

Resolved, That as much as we have dreaded and deprecated the consequences that may arise from Northern Abolitionism, we consider the consequences of successful Know-Nothingism as still more alarming. The former, from its sectional character, can only divide our once happy country; the latter will make our country not worth dividing. One universal chaos will cover all, through which no ray of patriotic hope will penetrate.

Resolved by the Protestant portion of this assembly, That knowing their general worth as men, and patriotism as citizens, to be in every respect equal to our own, we do most solemnly pledge ourselves to our

Roman Catholic brethren, whether Whigs or Democrats, indignantly to frown upon and manfully to contend against all and every attempt to deprive them of the civil and religious rights which are secured to all by the Constitution.

Resolved by the Roman Catholic portion of this assembly, That we do most cordially reciprocate the kind and brotherly sentiments expressed in the resolution just passed by our Protestant brethren. Acknowledging no higher allegiance on this earth than that which binds us to our beloved country, we can, and we will, stand shoulder to shoulder with all her patriotic children in resisting her foreign enemies or in protecting the constitutional rights of all her citizens from the assaults of domestic foes.[18]

What reason could Maryland give for going so completely into the camp of the Know-Nothings? True, the Know-Nothing Union degree, adopted in 1854, appealed to her desire to arrest any sentiment of disunion; then, too, the Philadelphia platform embodied a section favorable to slavery, so Maryland felt that she was protecting her slave property by casting in her lot with the secret political order. But did it not concern Maryland that the Know-Nothings were hostile to immigrants and Catholics? The only immigrants that were giving Maryland any trouble within her borders were the Germans, who were thorough-going abolitionists. But these same radical Germans hated the Catholic Church and attacked it by voice and pen, so on that score the Know-Nothings fraternized with the Germans, and even admitted these foreign infidels into their lodges.[19]

In Maryland there was no Catholic question, and the attitude of the Catholic Church toward slavery as a civil institution was not unfavorable to Maryland, a slave state.[20]

[18] *Catholic Mirror,* June 16, 1855.

[19] *Remarks on the Majority and Minority Reports of the Select Committee on Secret Societies,* 1856, p. 19.

[20] "The Catholic Church and the Question of Slavery," *The Metropolitan,* III, p. 265 (June, 1855).

"As all men," says Archbishop Kenrick, "are by the law of nature equal, no one is by nature master of another; yet by the law of nations not only the dominion of jurisdiction, but also the dominion of property

It was just because of her correct attitude toward slavery that the Catholic Church was being persecuted in the United States at this time. The answer to the question, "Why are Northern Abolitionists and Know-Nothings persecuting and proscribing foreigners and Catholics?" was straightway given, "It is because they have always refused to join with them in their outcry against slavery and the South." [21]

is granted to man over man: and this the old law ratified. (Exod. xxi; Lev. xxv). The apostles found slavery existing amongst most nations and did not condemn it (Ephes. vi, 5). With these authorities before her eyes, the Church in the Council of Gangres anathematized those who seduced slaves from their owners on a pretext of religion: but as far as it could, favored human liberty, by exhorting masters to manumit their slaves, until, slavery having been gradually and insensibly abolished, Alexander III, in 1167, forbade Christians to be held as slaves." (Kenrick, Theol. Mor., vol. i, p. 255).

He then proceeds to treat of slavery in the United States. "What," he asks, "is to be thought of slavery as it exists in the Southern and Western States? Truly in this plenitude of liberty in which we all glory, it is to be regretted that there are so many slaves, and that to prevent their rising, laws have been passed to prevent their education, often a serious hindrance to the practices of religion. But in this condition of the republic, nothing is to be done against the laws." (*Ibid.*, 256.)

"It may be asked, whether masters may retain as slaves, men whose ancestors seem to have been unjustly brought hither from Africa? We think the answer must be affirmative, for defect of title must be considered cured by lapse of time, otherwise the estate of society would be ever uncertain, in constant danger of outbreaks." (*Ibid.*, 258.)

Such is the doctrine which he lays down as regards the owner and his rights: and he proceeds to discuss the duties arising out of the relation of master and slave. Then as to third parties, he no less clearly lays down their duties: "Nor should we do or say any thing illegally by which slaves may be liberated, or on account of which they may be discontented with their state." (*Ibid.*, 257.) "We have the authority of the apostles before us: those who neglect it, seeking for humanity sake, to disturb the whole state of society, generally render the condition of slaves worse than before." (*Ibid.*, 257.)

Such is the doctrine of the Church as formally laid down by the highest theological authority in the United States: and it is repeated in the letters of the late Bishop England on slavery, addressed to the Hon. John Forsyth. (See Bishop England's Works, vol. iii, p. 118).

[21] Hambleton, *Political Campaign in Virginia*, p. 334.

Surely Maryland had seen that the Catholic Church was the only religious body throughout the land that kept aloof from the political question of slavery, and though very powerful at the North, she had given no countenance to abolitionism. It was for this offense that she had drawn upon herself the ire of the three thousand five hundred Protestant clergymen of various denominations, who had rebuked Congress in denouncing the Nebraska Bill. Attacked, the Church did not resist; reviled, she did not revile; she advanced doing good—she stood alone, immovable, unchangeable, the only conservative body in the land—the only body which did not take a partisan stand or send out its propagandists.

It was also well known in Maryland that the Catholic Church acknowledged slavery as a civil institution, and had always and everywhere left it to the civil power to abolish it, but had, nevertheless, at all times shown her love for the slave and her desire to secure his manumission. She had always recognized that wherever slavery exists cases of oppression will necessarily occur, but to relieve the oppressed the Church has appealed to the principles of the master, or redeemed the ill-treated slaves, or obtained for them more kindly masters, and where she had the power, liberated the slave, but always with the full consent of the slaveholder. The Church never used abolition societies as a remedy.[22]

In her wisdom, the Church saw that the abolition movement would produce the stability of slavery. This really occurred. After the agitation began, no state enfranchised its slaves; on the contrary, Texas, Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska, which naturally would have been free territory, were all added to the domain of slavery. And in these slave states the laws against the slaves were even more severe than ever, and all attempts to ameliorate their condition were neutralized.

The following paragraph summarizes the attitude of the Church toward abolition and the advice which she gave to her members on that question:

> Convinced of this, that abolition is in itself wrong, that it is injurious instead of beneficial to the slave; that moderation and the exercise of

[22] "The Catholic Church and the Question of Slavery," *The Metropolitan*, III, p. 272 (June, 1855).

Christian charity alone will effect the liberation and what is more, the elevation of the negro slave, Catholics must ever stand aloof from the abolition movement, and in their own way labor to effect the great end.[23]

This movement, as well as the fell spirit of religious intolerance that accompanied it, was transatlantic. In England, many men rolled in luxurious ease on the wealth hoarded up by their ancestors in the successful prosecution of the slave trade. They had time to view slavery at leisure; they viewed it at a distance, and agreed that it was a sin to own a slave. They took the public money to manumit the slave in the colonies; and the whole world applauded their heroic sacrifice.

The fever then passed to America, and all Protestantism was asked to accept the new commandment, "Thou shalt not own a slave." Those who had no slaves, agreed; those who had, refused.[24] Then the trouble began, and it would not be difficult to determine in just what section of the country it had its inception. The feelings of that section toward the Catholic Church were expressed in the resolutions of the Know-Nothing convention in Norfolk, Mass., which in part are as follows:

> WHEREAS, Roman Catholicism and *slavery* being alike founded and supported on the basis of ignorance and tyranny, and being, therefore, natural allies in every warfare against liberty and enlightenment: therefore be it
>
> *Resolved*, That there can exist no real hostility to Roman Catholicism which does not embrace slavery, its natural co-worker in opposition to freedom and republican institutions.[25]

Senator Pratt, of Maryland, believed that the American party had committed a great error in adopting the 8th section of the Philadelphia platform, not only because it was clearly unconstitutional, but because it was suicidal, looking to the American party as a Southern political organization, for he maintained that the abolitionists of the North were fully aware of the fact which seemed

[23] *The Metropolitan*, III, p. 273 (June, 1855).
[24] *The Metropolitan*, III, p. 265.
[25] Hambleton, *Political Campaign in Virginia*, p. 240.

to have escaped the recollection of the American party of Maryland, that the Catholic Church was everywhere right upon the subject of slavery. It was clear that its members could not become abolitionists and therefore the South might as confidently rely for the maintenance of its constitutional rights upon the Catholics of Massachusetts as upon the Catholics of Louisiana or Maryland. He was, consequently, not surprised to learn that the southern delegates in the Philadelphia Council were generally opposed to the introduction of the 8th section, and that it was, in fact, passed by the preponderating vote of their northern brethren; for while it was natural that the abolition portion of that Council should proscribe those from whom they could never have aid or comfort, it seemed to the Maryland Senator that the American Party South must have seen the false position it had been forced to occupy by those with whom it was impossible to affiliate permanently.[26]

The religious movement against the Catholic Church was encouraged by the unprincipled northern abolitionists to excite the Protestant feeling of the country in order to get on their side the religious prejudice, and in the meantime to do their real work in secret and finally to ride into power on its turbulent tide.[27]

An eminent clergyman of Virginia admirably expressed himself on this point:

> The traitors whom this country has to fear, are not foreigners. They are men who were born and live where Hull and Arnold were born and resided. Their treason is deep, deliberate and meditated for a long time.
>
> The clamor against foreigner traitors from whom no man can show us a single case where we have suffered any thing recently, or much ever, or been ever in any great danger, is all a make-weight. That clamor is but a mere availability. It is but a new form of appeal to military glory. It is the dust with which the eyes of the southern people are to be blinded, while in secret club we shall be abolitionized, as they boast we shall be. It is a piece of cold cautious, yankee cunning, by which the northern people, at one stroke, get us to help them against their rivals in labor, the immigrant foreigners, and by

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[26] *Catholic Mirror*, September 22, 1855.

[27] Hambleton, *Political Campaign in Virginia*, pp. 269, 308.

which they will soon ask us for another tariff of protection to American industry.[28]

It was this same clergyman who had said before that Know-Nothingism had not grown out of religion; that, in fact, all that it had to do with religion was to observe that the religious prejudice of the country was a strong lever with which to work another purpose. It made use of that lever as a tool; in one section, it was used to raise a cry against slavery; in another, against Popery.[29]

And Maryland joined in the latter cry. It was Rev. Robert J. Breckinridge who now sanctioned a political movement to stay the progress and power of the Catholic Church.[30] It was this same Dr. Breckinridge who had been so zealous in introducing the Bible into the public schools of Baltimore in 1839, and who had during the same year issued *Tracts to Vindicate Religion and Liberty.*

The Know-Nothing movement was political and religious. It was religious because of the intolerance that it sought to establish; it was political because of the means which it looked to in order to accomplish its objects. It sought to secure the power of the general and state governments, in order through them to disfranchise Catholics. It had no other bond of unity but this. It was in vain that the leaders claimed for it a purely political character. Its very existence depended upon its anti-Popery elements. The old Native American party failed because it was purely political. The success of the Know-Nothings was due to the anti-Catholic prejudices which a large proportion of the American people had inherited from their British ancestors. Through these intolerant principles, the Know-Nothings aimed at the control of public opinion, and in order to accomplish their conspiracy as a purely political measure they pretended to attack Catholics only in their relation to the State, and for this purpose endeavored to cast suspicion upon their loyalty to the Constitution.

Not a few of those who headed this crusade against Catholicity served as ministers of the gospel. Their art and the influence which they possessed made them powerful auxiliaries of the politi-

[28] Hambleton, *Political Campaign in Virginia*, p. 269.
[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 268-269.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 273.

cians who had projected the organization. By lending themselves to political demagogues, they chained themselves to the chariot of the revolution which was designed to break down the constitutional privileges of Catholics. In Maryland many Protestant clergymen took an active part in this movement.[31]

A review of this Protestant activity brings to light the fact that the revolution of political ideas, as indicated in the triumphs of the American party, was brought about by the prestige imparted to it by a very large part of the Protestant clergy.[32]

As early as 1830, considerable jealousy of the Church had been manifested by Protestant ministers. In the first issue of *The Protestant,* January 2, 1830, the following statement is significant:

> The present activity and efforts of the Roman Catholic Church to extend its influence in the United States are such as to awaken the solicitude of Protestants and to call for a special counteracting influence.[33] . . . It is, therefore, intended to issue a weekly paper which shall be exclusively devoted to a portraiture of Popery and the defence of the Reformation.[34]

Then some of the activities of the Roman Catholic Church were enumerated:

> . . . two seminaries are organized in Europe exclusively to train up, multiply and support Jesuit Priests and Teachers in the Republic. . . . Thus a new supply of Jesuit priests is preparing to enter the valley of the Mississippi. . . . The King of Bavaria, a Papist, has become the head of an association to diffuse the religion of Rome in this country. Vienna, the metropolis of a Popish empire is preparing to pour out her treasures for the same purpose—and Papist France unites in the project.[35]

The ministers thought it best to begin by attacking the Church in its stronghold. The First Provincial Council of Baltimore, held in 1829, its thirty-eight decrees, and the letter of the Council to

[31] Schmeckebier, *History of the Know Nothing Party in Maryland,* p. 29.
[32] *The Metropolitan,* IV, p. 716 (January, 1857).
[33] *The Protestant,* I, p. 1 (January 2, 1830).
[34] *Ibid.*
[35] *Ibid.,* January 23, 1830.

Pope Pius VIII, recalling the growth of the Church in the United States from its feeble commencement,[36] furnished the data for outlining their program.

The editors of *The Baltimore Literary and Religious Magazine,* Robert J. Breckinridge and Andrew B. Cross, in the first issue of their magazine, January, 1835, published the translation of an article taken from a publication in France, "The Annals of the Society for Propagating the Faith."[37] The following comment of the editors accompanied the translation:

> To this Society, its Missionaries report, and their accounts are published in the above paper; undoubtedly when published they had not the least idea that this should be seen by an American, and in part republished in the United States.
>
> The article is an account of the great council held in this city, in 1829, it was published under the head of 'Mission of Baltimore.' We republished it in our paper, because of its local character and the interest that must be felt in the subject, by every man who is desirous of knowing what Papists are doing here and in Europe.[38]

The editors commented on the article, and in their lengthy explanation of "the subject of trustees," spoke of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church as aiming at getting the church property into their own hands and of even having "the audacity to send to a foreign country the information that the Council has consulted *what means are necessary to repress the pretensions of the trustees appointed by the people.*"[39]

The letter of Archbishop Whitfield, "to the Society in France," dated June 27, 1829, was also published with comments by the editors.[40]

In Baltimore on April 25, 1835, "A number of gentlemen of different denominations of Christians, impressed with the importance of sustaining the doctrines of the Reformation," resolved to send

[36] Shea, *The History of the Catholic Church in the United States,* 1815-1844, pp. 407 ff.

[37] *The Baltimore Literary and Religious Magazine,* I, p. 8 (January, 1835).

[38] *Ibid.,* pp. 8-9.

[39] *Ibid.,* p. 10.

[40] *Ibid.,* p. 11.

an invitation to such individuals as they had reason to believe felt an interest in what they termed the *Catholic Controversy,* with a design, if practicable, to organize a *Protestant Association.* This resulted in a large meeting on April 28. A constitution, prepared for the government of the Association, was adopted on May 1, 1835.[41]

In December, 1835, the editors of *The Baltimore Literary and Religious Magazine* published an "Address of the Protestant Association of Baltimore," from which the following excerpts are taken:

> The Protestant Association of Baltimore, influenced by a proper regard for public opinion, wish to make known the reasons and motives which have induced the individuals constituting the society to form such an institution, and also to state, distinctly, the purposes they hope to accomplish by their organization. . . .
>
> In the first place, then, they distinctly disavow any intention to persecute any man on account of his religious opinions. . . . They would not, therefore, if they had the power, withhold or abridge a single political or social privilege now enjoyed by the members of the Church of Rome in this country, in common with their Protestant fellow citizens.—Much less would they wish to abate, or in any wise disturb the social and friendly reciprocation of courtesy and kindness which ought to subsist among members of the same political community without regard to sect or party . . . we have been convinced, both by reason and observation, that the peculiar doctrines and discipline of the Church of Rome are hostile and dangerous to civil and religious liberty. That a belief in many of the fundamental dogmas of that Church, necessarily imposes an implicit submission to priestly domination, which is incompatible with the due exercise of either civil or religious rights by the laity. . . . The whole history of the Church sustains the position, that a free government never did and never can be originated by, or perpetuated among, a people professing the faith of the Church of Rome.
>
> We are aware that the political influence of the priesthood is denied and honestly disbelieved by many Romanists. Many of them publicly renounce the authority of the Pope in all civil affairs: but they admit, at the same time, that if the priesthood should deny them the offices which they alone can rightfully administer, it is impossible for them to be saved; . . . It is therefore of little consequence what abstract

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 153 (May, 1835).

opinions a Romanist holds with respect to the civil authority of the Pope. He who believes his final destiny to depend upon the good will of his priest will not be easily persuaded to disoblige him in matters of less consequence. Indeed history has abundantly shown, that whenever the superstitions of the Romish Church have obtained universal credence amongst the people of any country, they have as implicitly obeyed the priesthood in civil as in religious concerns.

We would not be understood to mean that all the members of the Romish Church in this country are now prepared to admit the civil supremacy of the Pope. . . . The time even to inculcate the principle has not yet arrived; but we have a right to reason from experience—to anticipate from a retrospect of the past, what will, under similar circumstances, take place in future; and we accordingly infer, that if ever the doctrines of popery should obtain a sufficient influence over the people of this country, the civil as well as the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Pope will not only be earnestly inculcated but successfully imposed.

But, it may be asked, is there any danger of popery obtaining the supremacy in the United States? Does not the present numerical superiority of the Protestants guarantee us against such a calamity? To these questions we have only to reply, that mere numbers, without union, system or organization, never have effectually resisted when assailed by adversaries who acted in concert, and upon plans matured by skill, and perseveringly prosecuted. That the Romanists have skill and cunning to contrive the necessary plans of operation will not be denied; and that they act in concert to establish the universal domination of their Church cannot be controverted, if we allow them to be honest in the opinion, that out of their pale there is no salvation. These things being premised, we apprehend that there are many circumstances which come in aid of the Romanists in their design of proselyting the people of this Republic. We cannot go into a detail of all these circumstances . . . but we may glance at those which are most prominent:—and

First. There has been a prevalent disposition to commit the education of Protestant children to the several orders of the Romish priesthood, while the celibacy of their clergy has given them an advantage in respect to the price of tuition, which nothing but a combined effort of all the Protestant denominations can possibly counteract. These different orders of priests acting under the absolute authority of their superiors *residing in Europe,* and actuated by a unity of purpose and a common zeal to monopolize the education of our youths, and thus

effect the purposes of the Romish hierarchy, are spreading themselves through the length and breadth of this land, and aided by the patronage of Protestants, are establishing schools in every section of the country. . . . And that nothing may be wanting in their systematic efforts to monopolize education under circumstances most favourable to the dissemination of popish doctrines, nunneries are multiplying around us, immured within whose walls our daughters are to learn the intolerant dogmas and practice the superstitions and idolatrous ceremonies of the Church of Rome.

Secondly. This effort of the Romish priesthood we have reason to believe is aided by the secret support of the despotic governments of Europe, who look upon this country as the nusery of those liberal political principles which have shaken their thrones to their foundation, and who have no hope of destroying our civil institutions, but by assisting the Roman Church in the design of substituting popery for Protestantism. For the accomplishment of this purpose money, to an immense amount, is believed to be transmitted from Europe to the different orders of the Romish priesthood in the United States, but principally to Jesuits.

Thirdly. The perennial tide of emigration brings to our country an annual augmentation to the already numerous body of Romanists, both lay and clerical, with all their superstitious devotion and implicit submission to a foreign Hierarchy, which does not lack either the will or the means to mould them to her purpose—a purpose which is never lost sight of for a moment, and which, if we do not awake to our danger, she will accomplish "peaceably if she can—forcibly if she must." . . . . . let it be remembered, that the same efforts are making in England to subvert Protestantism as are in progress in the United States, and, we fear, with a still greater prospect of success. England . . . is staggering under the weight of an Hierarchy of her own, and is thereby greatly crippled in her effort to unite the Protestant denominations against O'Connell and his Romanist auxiliaries. The last trench of liberty and Protestantism may be found in the United States, and if we do not now prepare for the contest, may be there surrendered. . . .

Our object then is to resist the encroachments of the Church of Rome by open, manly and temperate measures. To use all suitable means to enlighten the public mind in regard to the nature and tendency of popery, and to suggest such measures as may be best adopted to stay its progress and prevent the accomplishment of its present and ultimate purposes, and which may at the same time be consistent with our obligations as Christians and as citizens. What those measures may be

we are not now prepared to say. . . The general diffusion of information throughout the community will be the leading object. . . . We shall act on the assurance that popery is a system at once false and dangerous, and use all fair and honourable means to impress the same opinion on the community.[42]

About this time, Archbishop Whitfield in stating his view of religion in the diocese of Baltimore wrote:

I may say without fear of exaggeration that as Baltimore is particularly noted for Catholic piety, so is the whole State and the District of Columbia. Nor have we the least reason to complain of the liberal contributions of Catholics for forwarding every institution tending to the good of religion and its propagation among Protestants, who are nowhere as prejudiced against us than in Baltimore. . . . No, perhaps there is not a state in the Union where there is a better prospect of further success than in the State of Maryland.[43]

In its issue of January 23, 1830, *The Protestant* acknowledged that the city of Baltimore was well known as "containing much Popish influence." Then added:

Is there not therefore cause to fear, that if Romanism were backed with power, *as it is in Maryland,* very many of the disciples of human reason, instead of being shocked at the Papal absurdities, would go over to that interest.

Therefore, the editors thought that it had become a paramount obligation upon all true Protestants "to expose the *rotten* condition of American Popery, as exhibited in that state."[44]

These statements showed how incensed were the editors of *The Protestant* because the Baltimore newspapers refused to publish the prospectus of their magazine.[45] In a report of 1830 to the Propaganda, Archbishop Whitfield wrote:

[42] *The Baltimore Literary and Religious Magazine,* I, pp. 377-379 (December, 1835).

[43] Archbishop Whitfield's *View of Religion in the Diocese of Baltimore,* 1830. (From the Original Catholic Archives of America, Notre Dame, Ind., p. 76), *Am. Cath. Hist. Researches,* XIII, 1896.

[44] *The Protestant,* March 27, 1830, p. 103.

[45] Breckinridge, *Papism in the XIX Century in the United States,* p. 4.

I might add that numerous conversions continued to take place, particularly in Baltimore, where our religion is so much respected that not one of the many public papers, though edited by Protestants, would consent to publish the prospectus of a most violent Anti-Catholic paper, edited in New York called the *Protestant* whose editor complains that Baltimore is lost to them, being completely under the sway of Popery.[46]

That there was at that time a mutually kind feeling between Catholic and Protestant can be gleaned from a voluminous mass of Maryland correspondence with *The Protestant.* A few excerpts are convincing: "The Protestants of Maryland feel towards the Romanists and manifest to them a greater degree of *charity* than most persons would deem wise. The Protestant community here will not tolerate anything harsh against their peculiar tenets." [47] Even some Protestant ministers of Maryland requested the agents of *The Protestant* not to go into their congregations to obtain subscribers, for they said: "If you do, it will be necessary to take public measures to oppose you." [48] So the verdict of *The Protestant* was that some parts of Maryland were as much missionary ground for evangelists to proclaim the gospel among Papists as the province of Lower Canada, with this difference: "In the British dominion," they said, "the unholy machination is weakening, while in Maryland it is continually acquiring fresh energy." [49]

This triumph of the Roman Catholic Church was said to have been achieved because Protestants had trampled down the Gospel principles respecting marriage and the education of youth. "Matrimonial connections between Protestants and Papists," declared *The Protestant,* "are invariably a curse to the former." But the capital sin of Maryland was said to be the action of Protestant parents in committing their children to Jesuits and nuns to be educated.[50]

[46] Archbishop Whitfield's *Report to the Propaganda,* 1830 (Copy from the MSS. in the Archives at Baltimore), *Am. Cath. Hist. Researches,* xix, p. 107, 1902.

[47] *The Protestant,* March 27, 1830, p. 103.

[48] *Ibid.,* April 4, 1830, p. 109.

[49] *Ibid.,* March 27, 1830, p. 103.

[50] *Ibid.,* p. 104. Breckinridge, *Papism in the XIX Century in the United States,* p. 121.

The ministers acknowledged that they did not find it easy to bring the Church into disrepute in Maryland.

We ourselves are enjoined, to "be quiet, and let the Marylanders alone!" *We will not be silent.* Their own Press dare not expose their iniquities; *ours shall.* Their own preachers are not at liberty to call things by right names; *we will.* And we hereby inform all our sincere Protestant brethern in that State, that we shall be turned from our course, neither by Jesuits, nor their coadjutors—nor by "Pseudo-Protestants" nor Laodiceans.[51]

The *Protestant* considered it the duty of the Home Missionary Society to send diligent, fearless evangelists to Baltimore.[52] The Deputation from the Congregational Union of England and Wales helped the ministers to stir up trouble. In the narrative of their visit to the "American Churches" is found the following statement concerning Baltimore: "The place is like Richmond, a considerable mart for slaves. It is border ground, and therefore desecrated by the worst circumstances of slavery: the apprehension, punishment, and sale."[53]

They speak of "Romanism in this Country" as follows:

Much has been said on the influence and spread of Romanism in this country. . . . It should really seem that the Pope, in the fear of expulsion from Europe, is anxious to find a reversion in this new world . . . sums are expended in erecting showy churches and colleges. . . . Every thing is done to captivate, and to liberalize, in appearance, a system essentially despotic. . . . They send out teachers excellently qualified; superior, certainly, to the run of native teachers . . . they find little difficulty in obtaining the charge of Protestant children. This, in my judgment, is the point of policy which should be especially regarded with jealousy; but the actual alarm has arisen from the disclosure of a correspondence which avows designs on the West. . . . Baltimore, the strong-hold of Popery, was once almost wholly Catholic; it is now greatly outnumbered by Protestant sects.[54]

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[51] *The Protestant*, March 27, 1830, p. 104.

[52] *Ibid.*, July 24, 1830, p. 237.

[53] *A Narrative of the Visit to the American Churches by a Deputation from the Congregational Union of England and Wales by Andrew Reed, D. D., and James Matheson, D. D.*, 1835, I, p. 302.

[54] *Ibid.*, II, pp. 77-80.

The anti-Catholic agitation begun at this time extended through several dioceses in a most frightful manner, resulting at last in Philadelphia in civil war. The leaders commenced this unchristian program by reviving the age-old calumnies regarding the intolerance of Catholics, and the game opened by the publication, early in 1834, of an edition of the Rhemish Testament, a reprint of that of 1582, with the original notes described in the "introductory address" as "replete with impiety, irreligion, and the most fiery persecution." [55] The notice and recommendations bear the signatures of over one hundred Protestant clergymen.[56]

By 1836, the Board of Missions of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States had five missionaries in Maryland.[57]

In 1845, *The American Protestant* was ready to show that something more stable than political organization was required to save the country, and forthwith called upon the Protestant community to labor for the welfare of the papal population. It declared that civil and religious interests must be based on the gospel, and that if instead of the gospel a nominal religion such as popery were substituted, the foundation-stone would be taken away and the temple of civil and religious liberty would fall.[58]

The operations of the American Protestant Society were, therefore, to be confined to two general objects: preaching of the gospel to Catholics and distributing books and other publications among them. This society was anticipating the approach of "a fearful crisis . . . in the shape of an attack," and was, therefore, at a loss to know whether its publications were all the weapons necessary to meet the attack.[59] The following resolution of Dr. Beman at a meeting of the American Protestant Society on its Second Anniversary, May 8, 1845, tells all too truly the designs of Protestants on the Catholic Church:

[55] *The Catholic Mirror*, February 16, 1856. (Quoted from *St. Louis Leader*).

[56] Shea, *A Bibliographical Account of Catholic Bibles, Testaments, and other Portions of Scripture*, p. 32.

[57] *34th An. Rep. of the Board of Missions of the Gen. Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States*, May, 1836.

[58] *The American Protestant*, I, p. 2, 1845.

[59] *The American Protestant*, I, p. 45, 1845.

Resolved, That the present state of Romanism in this country demands the entire efforts of Protestantism.[60]

In 1851, *The Republic* complained that while all their efforts and attention were bestowed mostly on the acquisition of money, the Propagandists and Jesuits were working for intellectual fortunes; that they were establishing their theories of government, social and religious, upon bases which would be impervious to attacks from their enemies. "They are instructing the young, or are making every effort to get them under their control. They are specking this whole country with their preparatory schools, erecting colleges . . . and thus molding from youth to manhood the public American mind." [61]

In the light of what has been said, it is not difficult to understand the part played by the ministers in the attack upon the Kerney School Bill in 1852-1853.

After incessantly laboring for a quarter of a century the Protestant ministers in Maryland succeeded in raising against the Catholic Church an outcry loud enough for a brief space to drown the cry against slavery.

In this atmosphere of religious and political proscription, Maryland refused to substitute a milder plank for the 8th section, and in the first state convention of the Know-Nothings, held in Baltimore, June 18, 1855, that state adopted and endorsed *in toto* the platform of the Philadelphia Council.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[61] *The Republic*, I, p. 79 (February, 1851).

CHAPTER VII

Conspiracy in Maryland, 1855-1856

By the fall of 1855, the practical identity of the Know-Nothing or the American party, as it now styled itself, with the Whigs was manifest in membership and character, and nowhere more so than in Maryland.

In the state convention of July 18, 1855, candidates for state offices were nominated,[1] and a short time afterward local and legislative tickets were put forth in almost all of the counties and in Baltimore City by both the Know-Nothings and their opponents. In some of the counties, Whigs and Democrats united against the American party.[2]

In the campaign that followed, a venal press was found a ready instrument to enforce the power of the political order in its political and religious intolerance, as well as a suitable medium for the dissemination of its calumnies. The effete stream of perverted history was explored to its filthiest depths, in order to drag thence the disgusting deposits of ribaldry and mendacity, so well suited to editorial depravity and clerical uncharitableness.[3]

It is hardly believable that Maryland, the land where the star of religious liberty first arose on this continent, and where under the standard of the cross upheld by the Jesuits it was first proclaimed, had so lost the spirit of those early days that John Carroll, Esq., a great-grandson of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, in his first speech as candidate on the Democratic legislative ticket of 1855 in Howard county, was forced to use these words in addressing some of the Marylanders:

[1] *Sun, American, Clipper,* July 19, 1855.

[2] *Sun,* August 11, 28; September 4. *American,* August 29; September 14, 1855. *Easton Star,* September 4, 1855.

[3] One of the worst publications circulated at this time was a series of twelve letters addressed to T. Parkin Scott, Esq., by Rev. Andrew B. Cross, a Presbyterian minister of Baltimore. These letters were published in the *Clipper,* under the title, "Priests' Prisons for Women," 1854.

I am a Catholic; but if you must proscribe, do not commence upon so humble an individual as myself. Go back to the past, and erase from the record of the Declaration of Independence the name of my ancestor and the companion of your forefathers, *Charles Carroll of Carrollton.*[4]

The address to the people of Baltimore on November 3, 1855, by the candidates of the American party for political office purported to expose the principles of that party, but it was in reality an appeal to the people and an attempt at justification for the adoption of the 8th section of the Philadelphia platform. They declared that their only purpose was to rescue the Republic from the control of factious combinations, sectional, sectarian, and political. In their efforts to put an end to all doubt as to their position on the principles relating to the law of immigration and naturalization and the exclusion of religion from politics, they dwelt at some length upon their purpose "to resist the violation of that great principle of American law which forbids religious sects to meddle in politics." The violations "of that great principle" were said to have been the following:

The combined efforts in many States to change the Public School system by and for the benefit of one great sect; the formal menace of a prominent leader of that sect in this city, on behalf of that sect to carry the school question into the municipal elections, and the actual report of the Kerney school bill before the Legislature of Maryland; the open and notorious canvassing for the votes of that same sect in the late Presidential election, resulting we believe in the throwing of the great mass of that vote for President Pierce; the recent agitation in the State of New York by the chief of that sect, to change or evade the laws of ecclesiastical property for the benefit of that sect, and the formal excommunication of the trustees of the St. Louis church for the refusal to violate the laws of the State in obedience to the law of the church—these things are fresh in the memory of the people, and they are what we regard as pregnant evidences of "an aggressive policy and corrupting tendency" in political matters of this great sect, *to resist* which policy alone we have proclaimed our opposition to the meddling of religious sects in politics.[5]

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[4] *Catholic Mirror*, September 15, 1855.

[5] *Sun*, November 3, 1855; *Clipper*, November 3, 1855.

It was such conduct, they declared, which had provoked the warning of the 8th section whose language was simply a declaration that no citizen had any right to hold civil allegiance to a power other than the people of the state. The conclusion of this part of the address was an indication of the chagrin of the American party because of the loss sustained in the municipal elections in Baltimore in October, 1855.

"We trusted," they said, "that the warning would have corrected the error it pointed out. But, on the contrary, the great mass of that sect have thrown themselves into *one* political party, and vote with it against us as one man because of that solemn warning against their violation of our old American law severing forever religion from politics." [6]

In the Pastoral letter of the Eighth Provincial Council of Baltimore, May, 1855, the Archbishop and Bishops had set forth in clear terms the nature of the allegiance which Catholics owe to the Pope. It would be impossible to misconstrue their meaning. The following paragraph is decidedly explicit:

Respect and obey the constituted authorities, for all power is from God, and they that resist, resist the ordinances of God, and purchase for themselves damnation. To the General and State Governments you owe allegiance in all that regards the civil order: the authorities of the Church challenge your obedience in the things of salvation. We have no need of pressing this distinction which you fully understand, and constantly observe. You know that we have uniformly taught you both publicly and privately, to perform all the duties of good citizens, and that we have never exacted of you, as we ourselves have never made even to the highest ecclesiastical authority, any engagements inconsistent with the duties we owe to the country and its laws. On every opportune occasion we have avowed these principles, and even in our communications to the late Pontiff, we rejected as a calumny the imputation that we were in civil matters subject to his authority.[7]

The campaign of 1855 was one of great political excitement. Both election day and the day succeeding it were disgraced by

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Pastoral, Eighth Provincial Council of Baltimore,* 1855, pp. 15-16.

fighting and rioting.[8] The Know-Nothings retrieved the losses of the municipal elections of October 10, 1855, by gaining a preponderance in the legislature, which caused the Democrats to be alarmed. Thirteen out of twenty-one counties went into the ranks of the Know-Nothings. Although most of the Whig counties became Know-Nothing, St. Mary's, Charles, and Prince George remained faithful to their old standards, and opposed the secret political order.[9]

The Know-Nothing party had triumphed, but not by its own proper strength. Had the contest been exclusively between it and the Democratic party, it would have been in a minority. The Know-Nothing leaders knew this, and in their "wild hunt for office" tried every art to win to their side the third party, the Whigs. That they held the balance of power was also recognized by the Democrats, who in some of the counties formed a Union ticket and thus secured victory. In the city of Baltimore and elsewhere the Democrats sought the aid of the Whigs without, however, courting an alliance with them. The Democratic party, accustomed to conquer, may have been too uncompromising toward an ancient enemy, now its natural ally. The Whigs, too, could have acted a more magnanimous part by forgetting past antipathies in order to rescue the state from impending disgrace and protect the constitutional rights of their fellow citizens from infringement. But the opportunity for revenge, in dealing an old enemy a stunning blow, was too tempting to be resisted.

It must be said, however, that many prominent Whigs in Maryland made noble sacrifices at the altar of patriotism; these were the true leaders of the party, the men who would naturally have stood at its head if it were organized and ready for action; these men placed themselves boldly in opposition to the secret, oath-bound conspiracy. It was the rank and file of the Whigs that went into the new party, while such prominent men as Reverdy Johnson, S. Teackle Wallis, James Alfred Pearce and ex-Governor Pratt came over to the Democrats.

The Democratic organization remained intact, as very few of

[8] *Sun, American,* November 9, 1855.

[9] *Sun,* June 5, July 3, 11, August 25; *American,* August 18 and 27; *Easton Star,* June 12, 1855.

the leaders went over to the opposition party. Whatever accessions the Know-Nothings made from the Democrats came from the rank and file. Old party lines were more broken in Baltimore City than in the counties and there the Know-Nothings received great accessions from the Democrats. Even the Eighteenth Ward, one of the Democratic strongholds, became Know-Nothing, and later the First, Seventh, Seventeenth, and Second yielded to the methods of the secret order. "Old Limerick," the Eighth Ward, alone remained faithful to the Democratic banner throughout the Know-Nothing persecution.[10]

The first proof of the fatal weakness of the American party was furnished in the contest for the speakership in the House of Representatives. After balloting for a Speaker from the meeting of Congress, December, 1855, until the beginning of February, 1856, the House finally elected Mr. Banks, an abolitionist from Massachusetts. The American party, as a congressional group, was wrecked; it had torn itself to pieces upon the unavoidable issue.[11]

While this contest was going on in the National Capital, Maryland was being convinced that Know-Nothingism had struck deep roots in the land of the Calverts and the Carrolls.

The new Maryland legislature, strongly Know-Nothing, met at Annapolis, January 2, 1856. It was hardly organized when, to its great consternation, the Governor, in his annual message openly and publicly attacked the new political order, whose aims and methods he denounced as nothing short of conspiracy. He asked for an investigation and legislation to correct the evil. The salient points of the Governor's message, relative to secret societies, were as follows:

> I should consider that I had failed to discharge a public duty, were I not to allude to a new element in the political controversies of the times, which in my opinion has already been productive of more baneful consequences, and has done more, to sever the ties, which should bind together our whole people, as one common brotherhood than any thing which has occurred, since the organization of our Government. I mean the formation and encouragement of secret political societies.

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[10] Schmeckebier, *History of the Know Nothing Party in Maryland*, p. 67.

[11] Smith, *Parties and Slavery* (*Am. Nation*, XVIII, p. 145).

In this country the adoption of the veil of secrecy, as a means of accomplishing any political end, is without any tenable ground of either justification or excuse. . . . A thousand channels of communication with the people are always open, through which the humblest citizen may criticise public measures, and arraign before the tribunal of public opinion, the candidate for official station, or those to whom for the time being may be entrusted the management of the affairs of Government. . . .

The nature and character of the issues, too, to which these organizations have given rise, are such as must be deeply deplored by all who sincerely wish the permanent peace of the country. . . . All history admonishes us that a war of races and sects is the deadliest curse that can afflict a nation. Let us not turn a deaf ear to her warning voice, by countenancing those who may rashly involve us in both, in the effort to accomplish political ends, by appealing to a morbid and fanatical religious zeal, and thus stirring at their sources, the most ungovernable passions and prejudices of the human heart. Indeed it may require already a most vigorous exercise of public virtue to turn back the tide of evil flowing upon us, from an improvident introduction of religious issues into the field of political agitation and to restrain that proclivity to intolerance and proscription, which has recently been developed in different sections of the country. We should ever guard the perfect freedom of the citizen in matters of religious opinion, and the purity of the ballot-box as we would our honor, and resist every invasion of either as a blow aimed at the very cornerstone of our political edifice. If on the one hand we permit brute force to control the ballot-box, and violence to deter the quiet and peaceably disposed citizen from the exercise of his right of suffrage, or on the other, allow a citizen to be proscribed on account of his religious faith, we "poison the very fountain of public security," our Constitution becomes a solemn mockery and the Republic a cheat and a delusion, whose very essence is despotism.[12]

The legislature resented the Executive challenge by appointing a select committee to inquire into that portion of the Governor's Message which related to secret political societies.

On January 22, 1856, in a note addressed to the Executive, the chairman of the committee called upon the Governor to furnish specifications of his charges. The Governor was thereby arraigned

[12] Governor's Message, *Maryland Documents* (*Doc.* A, 1856).

before the committee to communicate, as he himself expressed it, "all the information he may possess touching the existence of said secret societies in this state and of the nature and character of the secrets they preserve."

This action of the committee was evidence enough of what power secret societies can exert through their elected legislators. They officially demanded that anyone who attacked their organization should be summoned to give a complete public history of their covert proceedings before he be authorized to condemn them. Was it not enough that they were secret and thus unconconstitutional; intolerant, and thus anti-American; unscrupulous, and thus dangerous? Was it not enough that they publicly warred on foreigners and Catholics and were at strife with the liberal spirit of the age and the Nation?

They could not quarrel with the facts upon which the Governor's conclusions were based, for they were unfortunately too public.

But the Governor waived all advantages of position and replied, stating at length his objections to the said secret organizations showing that the existence of such associations had been established by universal testimony—eye-witnesses, ear-witnesses, in Congress, in the legislature, from the lips of outsiders and insiders, by exiled or fugitive members of the secret political order.

The Governor closed his communication by saying:

> The Constitution degrades no man, either on account of his place of birth, or his religious opinions, but equally covers every citizen of the State, of whatever faith, or wheresoever born, with its protecting shield. And if it shall be made to appear that in such of these political councils as may be shown to exist, oaths or pledges are administered for the purpose of qualifying or restraining the exercise of the right of suffrage, in any manner unknown to, or unwarranted by the Constitution, it will be for you and those you represent, to determine how far such obligations shall be allowed to conflict with the constitutional obligations of the citizen to the State, and to apply the remedy which such a condition of things may require.
>
> . . . I hope, whatever may be the result of your present investigation, that you may commend such action to the favorable notice of the Legislature, in order that henceforth any hindrance or obstruction

whatsoever, with intent to prevent a voter from depositing his ballot, shall be punished with due severity.[13]

The authority which the committee possessed to make application to the Governor for information was the only power conferred upon it by the legislature that the majority consented to exercise. The minority, disposed to perform its duty, had, on January 19, before the committee had been convened or organized, addressed a note to the chairman furnishing him with a list of persons who could give testimony relative to the investigation, but permission to investigate analytically the subject of Secret Societies was peremptorily refused them by the majority.[14] The reasons for the course which the majority thought proper to pursue are embodied in the resolutions adopted February 8, 1856, by the majority in the committee room, and glimmeringly alluded to in the report presented by the chairman:

Resolved, That the Governor in his reply to the Committee of investigation, clearly points out and identifies the American party of the Philadelphia platform, published in June, 1855, as the object of his animadversion, which was unanimously assented to.

Resolved, That the Committee deem the summoning of witnesses before it to prove the statement or description of the priciples, objects and purposes of the American Party of the Philadelphia Platform, published in June, 1855, as an *insult* to the intelligence of a large majority of the people of Maryland, through their representatives. Upon this resolution the vote of the Committee stood: Affirmative, Kennedy, Hall and Goldsborough. Negative, Merrick and Smith.

Resolved, That this Committee, in the investigation of the principles, objects and purposes of the American Party deem it unnecessary to send for persons and papers, as the people of Maryland, in the majesty of their power, have furnished the Legislature with abundant testimony of the purity of its principles, by the large and respectable representation now composing a part of its body. On this resolution the vote stood: Affirmative, Kennedy, Hall, and Goldsborough. Negative, Merrick and Smith.[15]

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[13] *Maryland Documents,* 1856, App. No. 1.

[14] *Maryland Documents,* 1856 (Minority Report, p. 6).

[15] *Maryland Documents,* 1856, App. No. 5.

The minority proceeded to carry on an investigation of its own, and on March 3, 1856, Mr. Kennedy, chairman of the committee, presented the majority report, and Mr. Merrick, the minority.[16] The first entirely evaded the proposed inquiries in every one of their details and sought to bring into disrepute generally the politics of the Governor, and especially to discredit his views in reference to the American party.

Mr. Harris, in his speech on the Reports of the Committee, delivered in the House of Delegates, brings out the striking contrast between the resolutions offered by Mr. Kennedy on January 8, after the reading of the Governor's message, and the report presented to the legislature by the same gentleman on March 3, 1856.

"When the Honorable Chairman," said Mr. Harris, "introduced these resolutions, with such a *bragadocio* air, could anyone have imagined that this grand proclamation—this *tremendous flourish of trumpets*—would usher nothing upon the stage, but GENERAL TOM THUMB."

This sudden transition would have been laughable if there had not been involved in it so unmistakable a disregard for the order of the House as was displayed in the course of the majority of the committee. The lecture upon the propriety of making the inquiry which the chairman himself had inaugurated came with ill grace from the majority committee, and the idea that grievances and offences countenanced by a majority of the people should not be inquired into was absurd. This is a constitutional government, and the majority may be as gross violators of law and right as ten or one man and just as worthy of punishment. Mr. Harris, who was a staunch Protestant, declared that when he read the majority report and saw that in it was presented the Philadelphia platform of June, 1855, as containing the true political principles of the country, and that the House was expected by the votes of its members to sanction and approve it, he hung his head for Protestantism; it had been false to itself, it had disgraced itself, it had allowed bigotry to become captain of its forces.

[16] *House Journal*, 1856, p. 622.

"I repeat, sir," he said, "we have cause to hang our heads for Protestantism. Will you sustain the principles contained in this platform, and in the next breath denounce as traitors the Abolitionists—the Black Republicans? . . . They, it is true, would liberate the black slave; you would make the white one. They would sever our bright stars, and take their share to themselves, but you would darken the whole galaxy. They may succeed in dividing the Union; you would make this Union not worth dividing." [17]

The minority members, because of the action of the majority, were prevented from doing more than communicating to the House of Delegates and the public certain general facts which they had collected with great care and industry. They declared that secret political societies of the kind described in their report were, in their judgment, of evil and dangerous tendencies in all governments and especially in a republic, and ought not to exist, still they did not recommend any legislative action on the subject,

deeming it much better to leave the correction of the evil to the known patriotism, intelligence and reflection of the people of this State and the Union, whose sober second thought, past experience teaches, is not likely to fail in applying to all specious and spurious political agitations or morbid political excitements, the best of all correctives—their censure and rebuke.[18]

As much as the Protestant ministers would have liked to legislate against the Catholic Church, the constitution of the state of Maryland forbade any minister of the gospel to hold a seat in the legislature. However, this prohibition could not deter them from using every effort to exert all their influence to bring about legislation hostile to Catholics, hence their activity in the Know-Nothing movement in Maryland.

One Presbyterian minister in Baltimore seemed to be obsessed with the idea that convents and nunneries should be suppressed. He devoted much of his time and energy to bring about state legislation to accomplish his designs. He began his malevolent work by publishing in 1854 a series of twelve letters under the title, "Priests' Prisons for Women." As has been noted, these letters

[17] "Speech of Benjamin G. Harris, Esq.," 1856, p. 7.

[18] *Maryland Documents*, 1856 (Minority Report, p. 45).

were used for political campaign purposes. However, no newspaper but the *Clipper* would publish them. On February 25, 1856, this same minister delivered at the Maryland Institute a vile lecture which was later published under the title, "Young Women in Convents."

During the same month, he had the effrontery to become the bearer of a petition to the legislature invoking that body to violate the sacred rights of its citizens and invade the homes of defenceless women. This petition presented by the Rev. Andrew B. Cross in the House of Delegates was indignantly objected to by Mr. Harris as an insult to the House, whereupon an animated discussion followed, during which the Hon. Mr. Merrick, an able and eloquent champion of civil and religious liberty, made the following remarks:

> Here is a great indignity offered this body—a false charge against a large, pure and respectable portion of our community, introduced and intended as a fire-brand, to excite malevolence, bitterness and ill-feeling, and is an insult to the House, to the community, and the State. It is false in every statement—in every inference, and those who are supporting the reading of it know it. . . . This petition ought not to be received; it has been originated and introduced here for vile purposes—to excite fanaticism, encourage bigotry and intolerance, and engender a war of religion and persecution. I brand it as it deserves, an infamous proceeding.
>
> I ask now what members here are ready to bring upon themselves and their fellow-citizens, by receiving and considering this petition, the eternal and unenviable disgrace which now shrouds the State of Massachusetts! Is the State of Maryland, heretofore distinguished in the nation for liberal sentiments and enlarged views upon religious toleration, is it to be stained by the act of the Legislature in receiving a petition whose foundation, argument and prayer, is a direct attack upon the religion of others? Do you mean to go on in the diabolical work already begun in the United States, of interfering in matters of conscience, invading private property, insulting defenceless women, and engendering a strife which will desolate the land in misery and woe? If so, go on—the world will know why this petition was introduced, and who it is who are disposed to fan the flame of religious persecution, which will destroy all that is free, tolerant or noble in humanity?

As every man has the right to petition the Legislature, so the House has the prerogative of refusing it after being made aware of its contents. But is this a petition of citizens for the removal of a cause of grievance? No! It is a prayer made by a single open, avowed, bitter and bigoted enemy, to enter into the private houses of quiet, respectable and orderly citizens, of whom he is the open persecutor, and to do this in open violation of the law and constitution. Persons who meddle with the affairs of no one, who neither annoy the public or deprive any of their privileges, who are known only by their good deeds of charity; who acted at Baltimore in the cholera season as nurses for the afflicted; who never disturbed the peace, but willingly sacrificed their lives for the public weal . . . whose very lives are a reproach to us, these are to be hunted down, villified and persecuted because a malevolent foe should make a sweeping charge against them![19]

The petition was received and then laid on the table by a vote of 49 to 13. Subsequent petitions were presented on the subject, so all were referred to a select committee which in due time presented its report. This report is worthy of being placed on record as a lasting credit to the gentlemen composing the committee and an honor to the House by which it was adopted.

The committee was unanimous in reaching the conclusions stated in the report. The members considered that the question to be determined by them was whether there were within the limits of the state of Maryland religious houses in which persons were unlawfully deprived of their natural, civil or religious rights and whether any case had been presented to the House, properly supported, which would justify an examination or inspection of such places, or demand additional legislative protection. They maintained that the single matter referred to them was the personal protection of those entering convents, and whether there was under the existing laws sufficient remedy for illegal restraint upon such persons. The committee suggested that no allegation had been substantiated, nor any proof exhibited that any person was unlawfully confined in any religious house or convent within the limits of the state of Maryland. The charge that such a state

[19] *The Metropolitan*, IV, p. 136 (March, 1856).

of things existed was only general, and the committee, admitting for the sake of argument that the charge was true, was still of the opinion that the laws of the land and those in force in the state of Maryland furnished an effectual and complete remedy for all such cases as had been reported for their consideration. They declared that they need only remind the House that the writ of *habeas corpus,* that great safeguard of personal liberty, threw ample protection around the humblest citizens of the Commonwealth, and, therefore, the committee had arrived at the unanimous conclusion, that, if, as alleged by the petitioners, persons were detained against their will, in any religious house or convent, it was not because the law did not afford ample protection, but because of the neglect to execute its demands—it was the fault of those interested in the *execution* of the law, not in the defect of proper legislation.

The committee believing that further legislation was unnecessary for the security of the citizen, or the peace, good order and safety of the state, submitted their reasons which had led to these conclusions to the further consideration of the House and to the enlightened judgment of the people of Maryland.

This report was signed by Messrs. Lewis P. Fiery, Anthony Kennedy, James R. Partridge, William D. Bowie, and William B. Clarke.[20]

[20] *Maryland Documents,* 1856 (Doc. Q, p. 4).

CHAPTER VIII

Collapse of the Know-Nothing Party, 1856

While the American party in Maryland was making efforts to raise a furor over convents and nunneries, the American party as a national political organization had broken into pieces.

On February 18, 1856, a National Council of the political order met in Philadelphia and struck out the 12th section of the national platform which had been adopted in June, 1855. The resolution on that section in the February meeting concluded as follows: "On the subject of the slavery question, we stand upon the principles and provisions of the constitution of the United States, yielding nothing more and demanding nothing less."[1] This was the Know-Nothing program. But as the 12th section had been struck out because the North and South were not united in sentiment on the slavery question, the party really had no program at all for the two halves of the party, so far as the question at issue was concerned, drew directly opposite conclusions from the Constitution. Senator Sheets, of Indiana, declared that he was ready for a compromise and would accept the Washington platform,[2] for if it contained anything at all on the slavery question, its doctrine on the subject was so confused that the public would not be able to discover what it was before a president would be elected.[3] This characterization was found completely proper, and the Washington platform was accordingly adopted by 109 to 77 votes.[4]

The South at once insisted that the nominating convention should take place immediately, because that section contended that the platform, so far as the slavery question was concerned, could come to have a meaning only by the nominations. Accordingly, on February 22, the convention met. The anti-slavery northern members refused to be bound by the platform just adopted, and

[1] Von Holst, *United States*, V, pp. 258-59.
[2] *Cong. Globe*, 34 Cong., 1 Sess., App., pp. 715-16.
[3] Von Holst, *United States*, V, p. 259.
[4] Von Holst, *United States*, V, p. 260.

demanded that no candidate be nominated who was not in favor of interdicting the introduction of slavery into territory north of 36° 30′ by congressional action.[5] When this proviso was laid on the table a score of members at once withdrew.

The southern delegates believed that they had found the right man in Millard Fillmore. The part that he had played in the struggles of 1850, and especially his position on the Fugitive Slave Law, afforded the South a sufficient guarantee that the slaveholding interests, in his hands, were in good keeping. Because of the fact that he had dropped many a powerful word against the encroachments of the slavocracy, there was hope that these expressions would have their influence on those elements that had not yet been too greatly affected by the Republican movement.

The convention, therefore, nominated ex-President Fillmore, the man who had signed the Fugitive Slave Law, with Donelson, of Tennessee, for vice-president. Thereupon, more members seceded and joined the earlier bolters. Plainly the American party as a national organization was bankrupt. Sectional passions were too strong to enable men from North and South to stand on a common platform ignoring the slavery question.[6]

From the very first, the fact that the discordant elements could never be solidified by one symmetrical platform was distinctly revealed. All definite platforms were repudiated; and amongst other pompous platitudes, they adopted the broad bases upon which all Christian constitutional governments are supposed to rest—the Bible and the Constitution. This may mean anything or nothing, according to interpretation. All parties that have ever played a part in American politics have at least pretended to respect the Constitution, and they have also admitted the moral guidance of the Bible. Starting from these very points, after a brief, inglorious cruise, drifting farther and farther from shore, without chart, or compass, or star Know-Nothingism had put back to port in distress, and after picking up the pilot of a stranded ship put out to sea again under the same old colors quite as appropriate to Chili as to the United States—the Bible and the Constitution.

[5] Wilson, *Slave Power*, II, p. 509.

[6] Smith, *Parties and Slavery* (*Am. Nation*, XVIII, p. 147).

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The convention dissolved fully aware that the defeat of the party was beyond all doubt.

"Know-Nothingism," says Von Holst, "was now, so to speak, nothing more than a dummy wearing the old uniform of the party, for people had become fully convinced that the masses could no longer be induced to join in the nativist demands. The presidential campaign had to be fought by the Know-Nothings, as by other parties, on the basis of the slavery question." [7]

Hence it was apparent that the negative program of the Know-Nothings would have to acquire, during the course of the campaign, a positive character. Of this situation, Pike, in *First Blows of the Civil War,* says:

They propose no contest on any doctrine or principle or measure, but simply a canvass on a man—and a man who is a representative of neither side of any living political issue. Occupying only a negative position, he is intended to accomplish only negative results. He is simply pitched into the canvass as an obstruction.[8]

In the modified platform which Fillmore accepted with his nomination a material change had been made in some important features. The 8th section, for example, which declared "resistance to the aggressive policy and corrupting tendency of the Roman Catholic Church" in the United States by excluding from office those who owe civil allegiance to any foreign power had been superseded by the 5th section, which declared that no person should be selected for political station, whether of native or foreign birth, who recognized any allegiance of any description to any foreign prince, potentate or other power. Surely no rational man could be caught by such a device. On the contrary, the latter was more obnoxious than the former. Any Roman Catholic might, with truth, say that he owes no civil allegiance as stated in the 8th section, and thereby exclude himself from its operation, but without a dastardly denial of his faith he could not aver that he owes no allegiance or obligation of any description to the recognized chief bishop of the Church.

[7] Von Holst, *United States,* V, p. 265.
[8] Pike, *First Blows of the Civil War,* p. 307

The slavery plank of the Know-Nothings was still the factor that appealed to the people of Maryland, and the name of their presidential candidate was the strongest that could have been presented in the state. His friends called him the "Model President," and pointed to the negative character of his administration as a prodigy of wisdom and conservatism.[9] The organ of the American party in Baltimore spoke of Fillmore as "national in views and patriotic in his purposes,"[10] which, of course, meant that he did not intend to interfere with slavery.

But with Fillmore's nomination, the question of native-Americanism vanished, and his candidacy, although ratified by a Whig convention in September, 1856, had nothing left for its support except traditional conservative sentiment. This party which a year before claimed to have the country in its grasp had shrunk to small dimensions in the North, and had only the old immovable and conservative Whig substratum in the South. The Kansas question had killed it.[11]

The presidential campaign in Maryland had its chief interest centered in Baltimore. It was there carried on vigorously and concurrently with the campaign for local offices. Disorder reigned supreme.[12]

The municipal election of October 8, 1856, was one disgraceful scene after the other in which Know-Nothing Clubs and a Fire Company were the chief actors.[13] Four persons were killed and many wounded.[14] The Know-Nothings elected their candidate for mayor, and a majority of the members of the city council.[15]

The exultation of the Know-Nothings over the disgraceful scenes and the results of the elections could have no other influence on the minds of the intelligent and patriotic voters of the Union than to excite a deep feeling of abhorrence and indignation which

[9] *Cecil Democrat* (Quoted by *American*, November 17, 1856).

[10] *Clipper*, November 1, 1856.

[11] Smith, *Parties and Slavery* (*Am. Nation*, XVIII), chap. xii.

[12] *Sun*, *American*, September 23, 1856; *Sun*, September 16, 1856; *American*, October 6, 1856.

[13] *Sun*, *American*, October 9, 1856.

[14] Schmeckebier, *Know Nothing Party in Maryland*, p. 38.

[15] *Ibid.*

could not be allayed until the frightful wrongs and evils complained of were effectually remedied.

The great body of the people of Maryland had no sympathy with the political ruffians and rowdies of Baltimore. As a people, the Marylanders were eminently conservative, national, and tolerant in spirit. In politics, they maintained an open and honorable opposition to the Democratic party, but they had always shown in their support of the Union and of the Constitution that party ties and party associations were as trifles compared to the honor, welfare, and prosperity of the Republic.

In Maryland, the Democrats had generally been the minority party, but evidences were beginning to multiply that soon they would be a majority party. In the pending crisis, the people of Maryland had to choose not merely between sectionalism, on the one hand and proscription, on the other, but whether they would sustain the great national party whose triumphs had been triumphs of the people, the Union, and the Constitution.

Pearce, Pratt, Johnson, and a score of other distinguished Whig leaders, by their noble example drew many Whigs into the Democratic ranks. To these men it was clear that the North, which was aggressive towards the South, had organized a party founded on geographical divisions.

When, in the convention, upon the nomination of Fillmore and Donelson, a majority of the Know-Nothing delegates seceded, they declared their intention of not supporting the Know-Nothing nominees, and subsequently they united in the nomination of Frémont, the Republican presidential candidate. This separation of the sectional from the national portion of the American party occurred in every northern state, so from this was deduced the nationality of the supporters of Fillmore and Donelson. But it was apparent that the national branch of the American party, now shorn of much of its original strength, could promise no free state to its nominees.

With such an outlook, it was evident to the Whig leaders in Maryland that neither of the national nominees would obtain throughout the land any votes but those cast by national conservative citizens, and it was, therefore, to be regretted that in this crisis that vote should be divided between the two national candi-

dates, while the entire anti-national vote would be concentrated upon the sectional nominee.

The leaders reminded the Maryland Whigs that any conservative vote for Fillmore would be equivalent to a vote for Frémont, as it would be a vote taken away from Buchanan, his only competitor. This admonition was opportune, for it was only to the South that the friends of Fillmore and Donelson could look for the probable chance of an electoral vote, and it was to the states of Maryland, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Missouri that they professed to look with the greatest hope of success.[16]

The political battle then being fought was of the deepest interest to Maryland. The issue tendered to the American people by the Democratic party was the maintenance of the constitutional rights of the South, and upon this issue the Republican party had staked the Union. In such a battle upon such an issue, it was imperative that the South, to be true to those who were fighting in her behalf, should help keep the conservative strength of the country united.

In 1852, in the Whig convention, Fillmore had almost the entire South, but the North prevented his nomination at that time because he had signed the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850, and also the other compromise laws. While Fillmore was President, that law could be enforced in Boston only by the aid of the military. In 1856, the same spirit, but more inflamed, prevailed in the North, and it was not difficult to foresee that it would defeat him again. Of the two, Buchanan alone had prospects of getting the votes of a few of the northern states, the rest would go to Frémont. Therefore, prominent Maryland Whigs argued that it would be improvident for Whigs to throw away votes on Fillmore, when they could not possibly elect him, and, furthermore, they contended that Whigs could not be said to desert their own cause when they refused their votes to a candidate like Fillmore, who some time before had deserted the Whig flag to range himself under the Know-Nothing banner.

Still some of Fillmore's friends in Maryland held the view that if he were not in the field, Buchanan's chances of election would

[16] *Catholic Mirror*, August 9, 1856.

be lessened. That argument would have its force in the North, but it did not justify the course of endorsing Fillmore in Maryland, for if he were not in the field every Marylander knew who would receive her electoral vote.[17] For this reason the action of the so-called Old-Line Whig conventions, both state and national, in endorsing the nominations of the Know-Nothing candidates was repudiated by many Old-Line Whigs who considered it a cunning device of men prepossessed with Know-Nothing principles, to deceive and entrap the Whigs.

The apprehension manifested by some of the citizens of Baltimore and the Governor of Maryland, during the interval between October 8, 1856, and the November elections, gives a faint idea of the disorder that prevailed in Baltimore at the municipal election of 1856.

A committee of citizens requested the mayor to call the city council in extra session to devise some plan against the recurrence of disorder.[18] The mayor refused the request and declared that he had made ample arrangements to insure peace.[19] The Governor's proffered services for the same end were coolly rejected by the mayor.[20]

Election day came, and with it "wounding, maiming and killing." Fighting and rioting were the order of the day. Ten persons were killed and over two hundred and fifty wounded.[21]

The Know-Nothings were completely victorious in Maryland. Their majority in Baltimore was over 7,000, while throughout the state it was 8,000. But in Maryland only was the party successful, and at what a cost!

From every quarter of the state the same tone of indignation was heard in condemnation of the imbecility of the authorities, who, if they did not openly encourage the outrages, permitted armed gangs of ruffians to deprive legal voters of their rights. Baltimore had been woefully disgraced. By her mob violence, the

[17] *Catholic Mirror*, July 26, 1856.
[18] *Sun, American*, October 27, 1856.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Governor's Message*, Maryland Documents, 1858 (*Doc.* A, p. 21).
[21] Steiner, *Citizenship and Suffrage in Maryland*, p. 39.

state was lost to the national candidate, and her true political majority belied.[22]

However, Baltimore was not Maryland. Citizens, worthy of the name, turned with shame and disgust from the scenes enacted in the metropolis—scenes which not only reflected discredit on republican institutions but which indelibly disgraced the whole community in which they occurred. And these acts of Know-Nothingism were perpetrated at noonday in the very face of the municipal authorities, and with the acquiescence, if not the positive consent of the mayor. Some citizens did not hesitate to express the opinion that Mr. Mayor Hinks was totally unfit for his position and deserved the reprobation of every orderly citizen, and the contempt, if not the indignant disapproval of every respectable man. The fact that he had informed a city of 200,000 inhabitants that he and his police were equal to an emergency for which, it seems he designedly made no adequate preparation, was held up to the shame of the mayor, and of the people, who with the sad experience of the October elections fresh upon them, had reposed upon the mere declaration of such a man.

The moans of the innocent men and women wounded, and the agonies of the grieved widow and orphan cried aloud for vengeance.

The *Catholic Mirror* exhorted the people of Baltimore to express their indignation in town-meetings, and to give, in every possible way, assurance to the country of profound sorrow and of the determination that the like should never again disgrace them. They were urged to seek out the ruffians who had perpetrated the deeds of violence and disorder and to bring them to justice.[23]

Baltimore's commercial interests were beginning to be crippled, and in consequence the interests of the people of the whole state. Therefore, it was imperative that Baltimore City should give unmistakable signs of disapproval of proceedings which not only allowed a mob spirit to run riot at noonday through her thoroughfares, but which also defied the plainest provisions of the law, and made a mockery of the elective franchise.

The national aspirations of the Know-Nothings had vanished.

[22] *Annapolis Republican* (Quoted by the *Catholic Mirror*, November 8, 1856).

[23] *Catholic Mirror*, November 8, 1856.

The campaign of 1856 was their first and last as a national political party. In the North, where they had shown their greatest strength, they had merely served as a bridge from the old Whig party to the Republican party. In the South, after 1856, the party lasted on, to a slight extent, in local affairs, but nowhere, except in Maryland, did it ever again carry a state election.

Maryland, in giving her electoral votes to a Know-Nothing candidate for the presidency, had planted herself on the miserable and abandoned platform of Know-Nothingism which had never held out any principle higher than secret association for the purpose of proscription and persecution. In this unenviable position, Maryland stood alone.

CHAPTER IX

Last Stages of Know-Nothingism

All eyes were turned toward the city called "mob-town," the stronghold of Know-Nothingism. From the day that the American party held its last National Council in June, 1857, until the outbreak of the Civil War, Baltimore, under the lash of Know-Nothingism, pursued her riotous career.

When this last National Council passed the resolution "that the American party in each State and Territory and the District of Columbia be authorized to adopt such a plan of organization as respectively may be suited to the views of the members of the party in the several localities,"[1] all the world knew what it had seen so often proved before—the secret political order had been a failure. It was left to Maryland to demonstrate to the American people for all time what must be the reaping when issues essentially personal—race and religion—are sown in the political field.

Maryland had given her eight electoral votes to a Know-Nothing candidate for the presidency. The American party rejoiced and flung its banners to the breeze, proclaiming Maryland the bulwark of conservatism between two ultra-sectional fires.[2] This party was exultant that Maryland, situated geographically between the North and South, the East and West, and bordering on the seat of the General Government, "had maintained her high and elevated position," serving as a rock of adamant against the ultra-abolitionism of one section, and the extreme of nullification on the other, both fanatical and equally destructive of the Union.[3]

The body politic had forgotten that it ever had been virtuous, and seemed fairly to glory in its baseness. To reform the state's dominant poiltical force or even to convict it of wickedness was no child's play, yet Governor Ligon fearlessly undertook the labor,

[1] *Sun*, June 5, 1857.
[2] *Clipper*, November 7, 1856.
[3] *Clipper*, November 15, 1856.

and his should be the honor of having broken the power of the secret political order.[4]

Historians have depicted in detail those four disgraceful years. It remains but to note what inevitably happens when any party follows the erroneous principle of looking not to how a state shall be governed, but who shall hold the offices; not to whether it shall have wise and wholesome laws, but who shall rule, though they bring ruin with their rule.

In the fall of 1857, Maryland's chief executive was a Democrat, her legislature was Know-Nothing, and her largest city was in the hands of that secret political order.

The elections for both municipal and state offices offered an inviting spoil. The outrageous proceedings of the municipal elections of October 14, 1857, caused the Governor to be apprehensive regarding conditions which would likely surround the state elections about to be held.

Hitherto, the Know-Nothing leaders, through the legislature and by the police power, which was under the control of the mayor, had been able to paralyze all of the Governor's efforts to free the state from the rule of ruffianism, but it never occurred to them that he could step outside the conventional office of chief magistrate and assume the position of actual executive of the entire state. This he did on October 27, 1857, when he extended to the mayor a written invitation to coöperate with him in endeavoring to have the coming elections kept free from the disgrace and rowdyism which had characterized several preceding ones. Mayor Swann in his reply flatly denied the right of the Governor to interfere. The action of the Governor on being thus rebuffed, and his subsequent proclamation to the citizens of Baltimore that the city would be placed under military guard on the approaching election day; the action of some citizens in persuading the mayor to make arrangements to satisfy the demands of the Governor by appointing two hundred special police from men of both parties; the proclamation of the mayor relative to this arrangement; the subsequent correspondence between the Governor and the mayor, were all evidences of the critical conditions that must exist when the

[4] Buchholz, *Governors of Maryland*, p. 165.

several authorities in any group come into conflict because of the unfortunate fact that in the mind of each one vested with authority there is not clearly defined the limitations of his powers. In this particular instance the people of Baltimore seemed to be involved within the grip of the dilemma of being hindered from the right of suffrage by lawless violence or of being protected in its exercise by the bayonet of the state militia, either of which showed a deplorable state of affairs among a free people.

Bloodshed and rioting were not the chief features of the state elections of 1857, but fraud, covert violence and intimidation were rampant. Unsupported, as they were, by the regular officers, the special police found themselves powerless. One who tried to protect the voters in their exercise of the franchise was recalled to the station for his pains,[5] others were told to leave the polls. As a result, before the day was over many tendered their resignations to the mayor.[6]

The members of the Know-Nothing clubs wore fine delicate awls strapped around their knees. These were used to inflict wounds on all those who failed to vote the Know-Nothing ticket, conspicuous because of the red stripe down the back. Most of the polling places were in solitary and disreputable neighborhoods, and in one instance a cannon was mounted at the curb to intimidate the opponents of the Know-Nothings.[7]

The Democrats were in possession of the Eighth Ward, which the Know-Nothings seemed to have tacitly surrendered to them. This was the stronghold of the Irish. The *Clipper* attributed all of the disorder which disgraced the elections of 1856 to the "Irish ruffians from the Eighth Ward."[8] However, in justice to the Eighth Ward "blackguards," as they were called, it should be remembered that they were not the aggressors. They fought in defense of their rights and of their lives, a proceeding which would have been altogether unnecessary were it not for the attacks of the Know-Nothings and the failure of the Know-Nothing municipal authorities to afford police protection. Their courage bore good

[5] Schmeckebier, *History of the Know Nothing Party in Maryland*, p. 87.
[6] *American*, November 5, 1857.
[7] Schmeckebier, *History of the Know Nothing Party in Maryland*, p. 87.
[8] *Clipper*, November 6, 1856.

fruit, for in due time the Eighth Ward was the one ward in which the Know-Nothings did not dare attack or intimidate their opponents.

With such forces at work, it was not hard to foresee what the results of the elections would be. The Know-Nothings elected Hicks, their candidate for Governor, the other state officials and four out of six Congressmen. They also continued to have a majority in both Houses of the legislature.[9]

The contesting of the Congressional elections which followed was an attempt to overcome the results of terrorism. Much testimony was taken but the contestants were unsuccessful.[10]

The opening of Maryland's second Know-Nothing legislature, January 6, 1858, was followed by the reading of the Governor's Message with its twelve pages devoted to an exposure of "Lawlessness in Baltimore." Only a record of violence, bloodshed, and terrorism could call forth in the Message of a State Executive such words as these:

> This is anarchy; and the issue of such a condition of things under our system of government is political confusion. The formal power it creates is an essential tyranny. It sways a spurious sceptre, over a people despoiled of their rights, and its career must be in profligate antagonism with law, order, and good government.[11]

The Governor was denounced by his opponents at every turn, but he had done his work courageously and thoroughly and soon the fruits were seen in the spirit of reform that took hold of the people.

On January 13, 1858, Governor Hicks took his oath of office.

In the fall elections of the same year, Mayor Swann was reëlected amidst intimidation and disorder. The Know-Nothings also elected all but two members of the city council.

There followed a nominal reörganization of the police force, but it had little effect on the general lawlessness, and none whatever in checking the disorder at elections.

[9] Schmeckebier, *History of the Know Nothing Party in Maryland*, p. 88.

[10] Tuska, "Know-Nothingism in Baltimore, 1854-1860," *The Catholic Historical Review*, New Series, V, p. 238 (July, 1925).

[11] Governor's Message, *Maryland Documents* (Doc. A, p. 26).

Then the inevitable happened. The Know-Nothings having conquered all their opponents began to fight one another, and so great was the disorder prevailing among these "real natives" that even a London newspaper,[12] in introducing the reports of the Baltimore elections of 1859 and the disorder accompanying them, had this to say: "The following telegrams contain some curious illustrations respecting American freedom of elections."

The Democratic party seemed powerless. At a state convention of Democrats in 1859, a free discussion arose among the delegates in reference to the Democratic party and its prospects in Maryland. A delegate from Washington county spoke in strongest terms against Baltimore and its then degraded political and social condition, whereupon Mr. Joshua Vansant undertook to vindicate the character of his constituents. He declared that Baltimore had given majorities in support of every Democratic President of the United States, save the one then in office, and, but for the murderous efforts of lawless clubs, backed by the mercenary and not more unworthy police of the city, would have rallied up for Buchanan a greater majority than she had ever given before. Mr. Vansant asked the delegates to reflect upon the following facts: that the rowdy and murderous elements of Baltimore had, for years, been organized into Know-Nothing Clubs; that these ruffians were armed with the most effective deadly weapons; that their armories of muskets and rifles were located adjacent to places where freemen should deposit their votes; that these men were stationed on the way to the polls, and at the polls, to murder those who had the hardihood to attempt to cast a ballot that did not bear the Know-Nothing mark; that these ruffians were sustained and abetted in their fiendish work by a standing army of police some six hundred strong, and having thus reflected, he would have reason to wonder that a single Democratic vote had been cast in Baltimore for the preceding three years. Because the municipal arm of Baltimore assaulted where it should have protected, it was more to be feared than the bowie knife of the vile clubs, and Mr. Vansant was of the opinion that if the mayor of Baltimore and his mercenary police would betake themselves outside the city on

[12] *London Illustrated News*, August 20, 1859.

the days of election, the lawless clubs would be well cared for by the democracy of Baltimore, and the inestimable right of the ballot would be vindicated, and law and order would reign supreme.[13]

To remedy the evils of insecurity of life, property, and personal liberty, the *American*, on August 26, 1859, demanded the holding of a town-meeting. Well-disposed citizens, without regard to party, met on September 8. Resolutions relative to arrangements for the fall elections were passed.

This meeting called forth counter-demonstrations, headed by Henry Winter Davis. As a result, the usual amount of disorder prevailed at the municipal elections of October 13, 1859, but in spite of it the Reform party elected six members to the city council.[14]

The state elections, three weeks later, were as disgraceful as ever. The use of the awl and the coop for voters insured the success of the Know-Nothing candidates in the city of Baltimore, but the rest of the state, disgusted with the iniquitous methods of the Know-Nothings, and with the state of affairs in Baltimore, went over into the Democratic column. The legislature was at last Democratic.

This new legislature met on January 4, 1860. In its determination to get at the root of riotous conditions in Baltimore, the legislature passed at once an act whereby the control of the police power was taken away from the mayor and put into the hands of a Board of Four Commissioners elected by the legislature.[15] This Board was at the same time authorized to divide the city into election precincts.[16]

It was not to be expected that the mayor and his emissaries would meekly submit to the loss of the control of their most effective weapon. The mayor refused to acknowledge the constitutionality of the Act creating the Board of Police Commissioners. The contest which ensued between the city of Baltimore and the state

[13] *Catholic Mirror*, August 6, 1859.
[14] *Sun, American*, October 14, 1859.
[15] Act of 1860, chap. 7.
[16] *Ibid.*, chap. 9.

of Maryland in regard to the validity of the Act was decided by the Court of Appeals in favor of the state, April 17, 1860.[17]

That day was indeed the dawning of a new era on the city. Law and order were reinstated; the rule of the club, the awl and the revolver was gone, and with it wanton cruelty, robbery, murder, and remorseless guilt in all its hideous phases.

The Know-Nothings thus weakened, did not stand much chance of success in the next election. In every other part of the country they were but a memory; in no part of Maryland but Baltimore did they still exist.

The campaign of 1860, however, was their last fight. They had long since outlived any principles. Within their ranks there existed only the wild hunt for office. Indeed one of the greatest evils of the reign of Know-Nothingism was the elevation to official position of a horde of most worthless and unscrupulous men—men who were bad enough in the most ordinary social relations, and who could never aspire to public position through the popular favor, but who were capable of accomplishing their unhallowed designs by means of ruffianism, thereby turning to personal account every opportunity within reach.

The fall election of 1860 passed off quietly and orderly. Brown, the Reform candidate for the mayoralty, was successful, and the entire Reform ticket was elected in both branches of the city council.[18]

Thus ended the career of the Know-Nothings. Then came the Civil War with all its horrors.

In Maryland, the attempts of this secret political order to impress any enduring feature on the policy or interest of the state were so abjectly negative as to entail on the state itself no other consequences than those which spring from a rebuking conscience, lashed into penitence by well-merited ridicule and contempt.

There remain the annals of the reign of Know-Nothingism in Baltimore—one long record of vice, intrigue, and abomination.

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[17] Baltimore *vs.* State, *Maryland Reports*, 15, p. 376.

[18] *Sun, American*, October 11, 1860.

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